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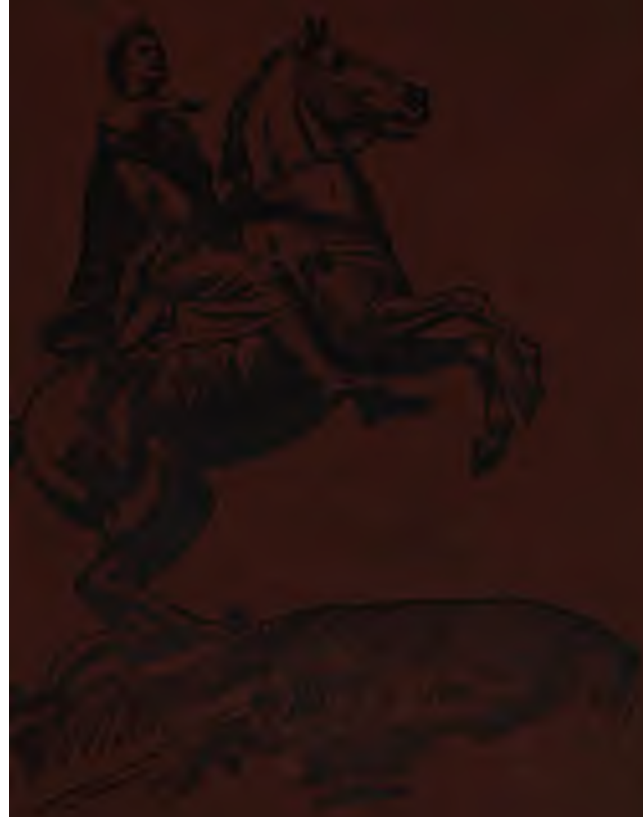
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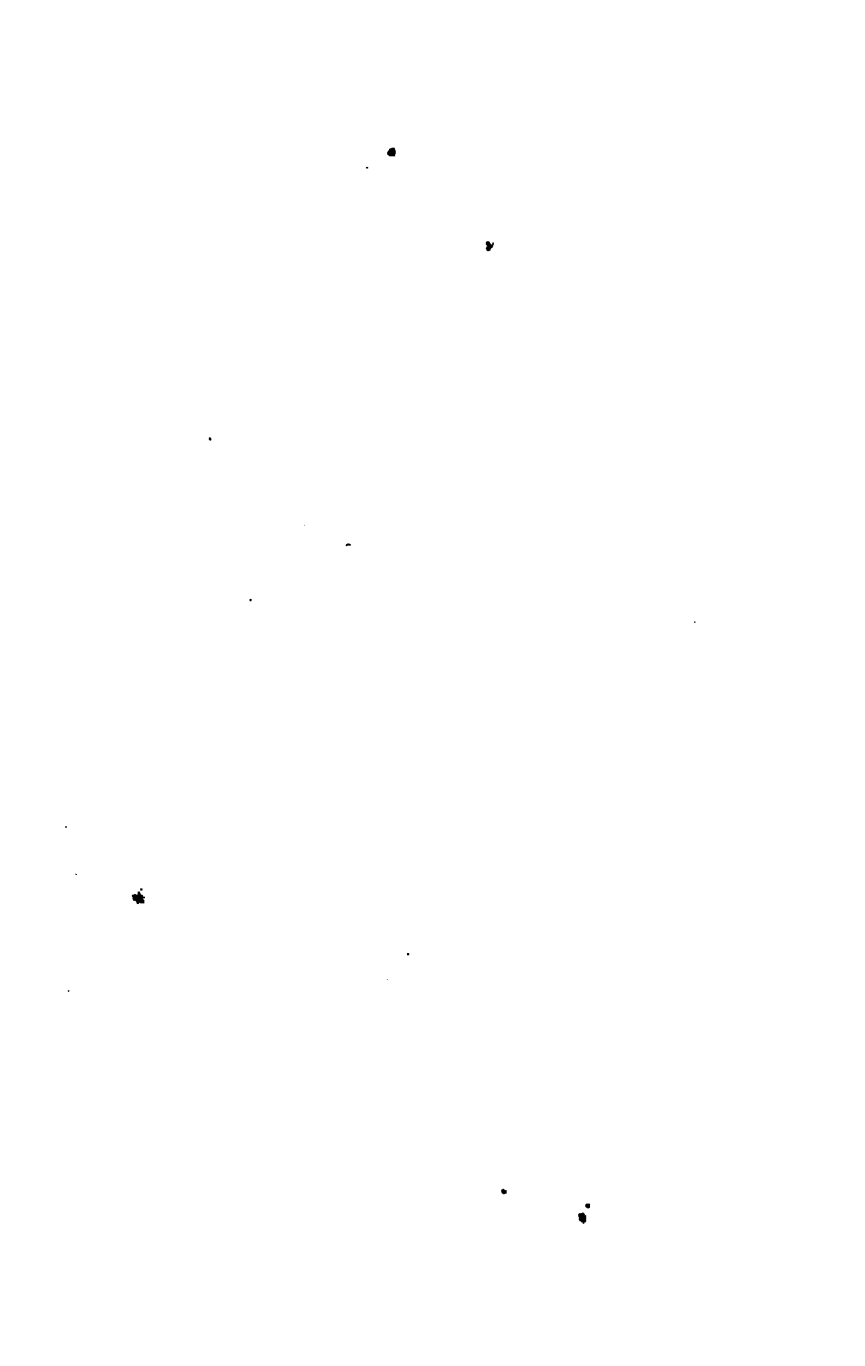
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STORY  
OF RUSSIA

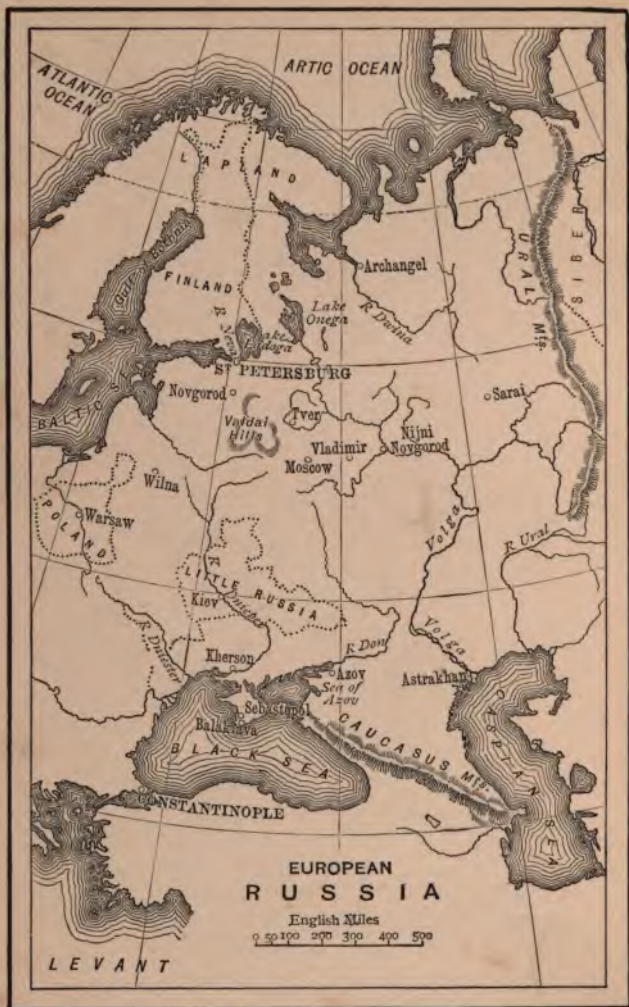












[Frontispiece.]

THE STORY  
OF  
RUSSIA

BY  
M. E. BENSON

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE RUSSIANS' HOME.

WHEN Beauty was left in the Beast's house by her father, what did she do? What did she most want to know?

She wanted to know what the Beast was like, and whether he would be likely to eat her up at once. But he was not there to be looked at. Still that was no reason why she should not find out what he was like.

She looked round the room. First she saw how prettily and carefully everything was arranged, and she thought he could not be rough and rude. Then she looked at the books, and thought he could not be stupid or sleepy. Then at the flowers and birds in the garden, and she thought with those near him he could not be cruel and gloomy.

So all the time she was learning what the Beast was like. And when he came she felt that she knew so well what his mind was, that she was surprised to see that his outside was rough and ugly. If she had seen the Beast himself first, it would

have taken her a long time to find out that he was not a real beast.

So you see that by looking carefully at the place he lived in, she learned a great deal about him without once seeing him.

That is just what I want you to do about the Russians. Before we look at them, we will look at their house, Russia, and see what that tells us.

It is a very large house ; as large as all the rest of Europe put together. There is plenty of room for a large nation ; even room enough, one would think, for several nations at once. Why should not one nation go and settle down by itself in one corner, and others in other corners, and never know or care anything about each other ?

For two reasons. Perhaps you live in a house in a row. If you do, it is also likely that you do not know your next-door neighbour. Yet there is only a wall between you. Why do not you meet ? Because you each have all you want on your own side of the wall ; all the food you want, and the books you want.

But suppose that you and your next-door neighbour were put down, each in one corner of a large open field. And suppose too that you had only water to drink in your corner, and he had only food in his : what would happen then ? Soon you would each go wandering about to find what you



wanted, and you would meet, and agree to exchange water and food. So you would know each other and live together.

Russia is just like this open field in two ways.

First, it is flat, so that there are no mountains to rise up like walls between nation and nation. All the stone in Russia lies flat along under the earth. It has never been broken up by earthquakes, except in one small place. Secondly, there are different sorts of things to be found in different parts of it. In the north, wood and some sorts of animals. In the south, corn and fruits.

So you see that there are no walls to keep different nations apart; and the nations must meet and exchange their goods and know each other.

There is another thing to remember about Russia.

When Beauty was in the Beast's house, she had not time or chance to see whether he had any neighbours, or what they were like. But if she had seen them, and had found them courteous and kind, and had found the ways to their houses well trodden by the Beast, she would have thought that he would be kind and gentle too.

Now Russia is unlucky in her neighbours. This also for two reasons.

The first reason is that there are very few doors out of Russia; very few ways to get to the countries round.

Look, it is nearly a square. On the east side there is a long straight wall, and no door through it. That wall is the Ural Mountains. It is quite a low wall, but for all that it is more trouble to climb even over a low wall than to stay where you are.

That wall is rather a good thing than otherwise, for the neighbours of the Russians on the other side of it are not pleasant neighbours. They would have taught the Russians bad ways and bad manners.

But now let us look to the north. There is the sea, with plenty of bays and gulfs, so that it seems as if this side was full of doors. If the Russians can go out that way it is lucky for them. They might sail round by Norway and Sweden to Germany and England, and the other European countries. They would be very good neighbours for the Russians, for they were like clever elder children, when the Russians had baby minds and babyish ways.

Ah ! but these doors are of no use to the Russians ; or very little use. They are only open for two or three months in the year. All the rest of the year they are tight shut and locked by great blue icebergs, between which no ships can sail. The Russians cannot get to their good neighbours that way.

But look along the side a little further. Russia, you see, seems to have a small room, which goes right up to the top of the peninsula of Norway and Sweden. Cannot she get out that way?

No; for that piece of land, which is called Finland, is a very difficult land to pass through.

It is as if the Beast's front hall, out of which the house-door opened, was full of boxes like a lumber-room—boxes piled one on the top of the other, and stopping the way everywhere; and as if the roof had not been mended, and the rain had come in, so that all the boxes were lying in great pools of water.

For Finland is full of great granite rocks that came floating there long centuries ago in icebergs. When the icebergs melted, the granite blocks, which could not melt, dropped down on the earth and lay there. And as the icebergs melted, the water that ran away from them, and the icy sea which brought them, left pools of water behind in the vast stony basins of the land.

So Finland is of no use as a way to Europe. But what do we come to if we go across Finland to the south-east?

This looks well. There is a sea, the Baltic, which goes down to the coast of Germany. That is like a good road to the house of good neighbours. Three doors open upon it. The Gulf of Bothnia is the

most northern one ; but that, like the bays on the north side, is shut and locked half the year. That is little use.

Then a little lower down come the Gulfs of Finland and of Riga. For many years those doors were closed and shut to the Russians by fierce enemies who lived there. It was as if the Beast's door had been guarded by fierce robbers who would not let him pass. But at last the Russians conquered them, and made the Gulf of Finland their own. Then they built a city there, and called it the window from which they could look at Europe.

It is very lucky for the Russians that they have that door. Look at the two other sides.

On the west there is first a straight easy way into Europe. Some of the Russians' relations went there and settled down. But then they quarrelled with the Russians, and would not let them pass through to go into Europe.

Further down the west side there is a long range of mountains. That is a wall without doors, so Russia cannot go to Europe that way.

Then on the south the doors only lead to bad neighbours or to quarrelsome neighbours.

The Black Sea leads to Asia, where the neighbours are not good for the Russians, or to Constantinople, which always quarrelled with them. Over the Black Sea come high, rocky mountains, the Caucasus, and



across them a sea which often freezes in the part that touches Russia.

So you see that the Russians were left very much to themselves. It took them a long time to find out that neighbourly help was good, and then much trouble to get it. So the Russians grew up slowly, and were ignorant for a long time. Children who are not told that fire burns can only learn it by putting their fingers into it and getting burnt. So the Russians often only learned what things were harmful by trying them and suffering for it. You must be sorry for them, as you would be sorry for the burnt children.

Now for the Russians' house itself. I want you to use your eyes well, for it has a great deal to tell you.

It is very flat, laid out all open. Only in the middle there is rising ground in the shape of a square, like a platform in the middle of a room. At the top corner of the square there are some little hills called the Valdai Hills.

Now you know something which I have not told you. You know which way the rivers run.

For take a piece of paper, and pour some water on it. Then tip up the middle of the paper. The water all runs off to the sides. So from this low rising ground in Russia the rivers come flowing down to the frontiers. That is very important, for rivers

are like roads and railways to those early men. There is a very interesting fairy story coming presently about three of these rivers.

Come up to the Icy Sea, and let us pretend that we are sailing over Russia in a balloon. We can look down with strong telescopes and see what it is like.

See, first, that Russia is divided into two halves—one half is forest and the other flat green plains. To the north forests, to the south plains.

Now look down below you. This is November, so there are great icy stretches of sea. Huge icebergs lift their blue sides above the snow, and sea-birds are flying about and screaming. Look at that great white beast picking his way among the bare granite rocks on the shore. That is a white bear. You will see many strange beasts up here,—bears and wolves, and lynxes and foxes, and reindeer.

The shore is all bare and frozen, covered with little salt pools. Beyond these are still salt marshes, with trunks of trees lying on them here and there. Between the pools a grey moss creeps about. All the shore is bleak and bare and cold with bitter winds. Sometimes there are snowstorms, and then the snow is heaped up in great masses by the wind, and sweeps on, writhing and turning and burying everything with its white veil. And on clear

frosty nights the northern lights burn bright in the sky.

Away to the west lies Finland, with granite rocks and salt pools, and its long line of fir-trees like a horse's mane.

Up here there is night and scarcely any day for half the year; in the summer there is day for three months with no night. The early Russians made up a story about this. They said that the Dawn and the Sunset loved each other, and went wandering about to find each other half the year. And in the summer they met and burned their lights together.

Beyond these marshes comes the vast forest. At first it is only stunted, miserable-looking alders and little wizened willows. Then, as our balloon sails gradually away from the cruel cold sea, come silver birches stretching away for miles and miles, and then the dark-green pines, and last of all the oaks.

Look to the west, to your right hand. There lie two great lakes, with many little ones round them. That largest, the one nearest us, is called Lake Onega. It is like a hand and wrist with fingers stretching after Finland. But that hand is nearly as large as the whole of Yorkshire.

The shores are all covered with rocks, and are difficult to land on. The sailors know that well,

and so do the sailors' wives, when there are fierce winds all night and the cruel Onega catches at ships with its hungry waves and swallows them up.

That second lake further to the west is Lake Ladoga. That is larger still. On the south its shores are low and sandy, covered with loose stones of all sizes. There the lake is quite shallow. Up to the north it gets deeper, and great granite cliffs rise up from the shore.

Look at the south of it. There is a great river flowing in. We have passed many rivers on our way through the forest. But we must look well at this. It is the Neva, and it is nearly a mile wide. On that great river the Russians built a city so proud and mighty that it called itself "My Lord The Town on the Neva," or "My Lord Novgorod."

On it, later, they built the city which was their window that looked at Europe. So look at it well as it comes smoothly along among birches and pines and alders, through many little lakes, going straight north to the Lake Ladoga.

Look at the swamp to the south of the Valdai Hills, with pines on their tops. There begin two tiny little streams flowing east. One is the Volga, and as it goes it grows and grows till it is the largest river in Europe. The other little stream flows south-west. That is called the Dnieper.

Now comes the fairy story.



Once upon a time the Dnieper and the Volga were two children, brother and sister. Their father and mother died, and they hadn't a crust to eat, and had to work all day to get food. They dressed in rags which they picked off dust-heaps, and were cold and hungry.

So one day, when they had been crying with hunger, they made up their minds to walk about the world till they found a place where they might turn into great rivers. So they walked about the world for three years, and at last they stopped to spend the night in a swamp, where they went to sleep.

But while Dnieper was asleep the cunning Volga thought she would turn into a river and flow quietly away to choose the best and most sloping place for herself. She flowed away to the west, between flat and marshy land on one side and hills on the other. At last she got frightened lest Dnieper might catch her. So she suddenly turned her course, and ran straight south to hide in the sea.

When Dnieper awoke he was very angry to find Volga gone, though he was generally very good-natured. And because a river can run faster than a man, he too changed himself into a river, and flowed away south, hoping she had gone that way.

He rushed so fast in his anger that he cut his way deep through granite rocks and steep slopes. He was still furious when he left the forest, but

about half-way through the plains his good temper came back again and he flowed more quietly. At last he flowed so quietly that he left pretty little islands with oaks and aspens and poplars standing up in the middle of his current. And he no longer cut a deep way, but spread out gently over the country, and so flowed into the Black Sea.

He never caught the Volga, but after all his course was quicker than hers, for he had cut such deep ways in his anger. Now you know why there are cataracts on the Dnieper. He was rewarded, too, by having Kief, the second great city of the Russians, built upon him, just where he left the forest.

Now come on quickly over the rich plains. There are apple-trees and cherry-trees, and all sorts of fruit. Corn grows well, though in winter it is very cold.

So we blow along for miles and miles. Here and there, where the soil is turned up, you can see that it is rich and black—so black that this is called the Black Land.

Now look below you, and you will see these trees giving way to vast grass-grown plains. The grass is five or six feet high.

A strange flat place. As far as we can see there is nothing but flatness, like a great sea of grass. Bisons, wolves, foxes, and hares live here. In April for a few weeks it is covered with flowers of all kinds. There are thyme and hyacinths, and tulips

and pinks, and thousands of larks sing everywhere. Presently the hot sun and scorching winds burn it all to a dull brown. Later comes the snow, and covers it with a smooth white coverlet till the spring.

There are no long shadows here to tell when the sun is sinking. Down it drops, and darkness comes, as if it was a lamp snatched away.

Now come on to the Black Sea. On the shore are rushes and reeds. Here and there you can see a row of oaks and birches and willows; that shows that a river is running there.

Then come sandy plains with coatings of ice for miles and miles. Look at that small sea that separates that little three-cornered island, the Crimea, from the land. There are long stories to be told about that little island. To the Sea of Azof it is all sandy and bare, but on the outer side it has fine cliffs and rich trees.

Look to the east, at that little neck of land between the Caspian and the Black Sea. First there are trees, and then long dark marshes. Rising out of the marshes there are rocky peaks and crags, with precipices between them, and eagles flying round, and misty clouds. Then at the top of all, against the sky, bright snowy mountain-tops. Those are the mountains of the Caucasus.

One look at the Caspian, and we shall have seen

the Beast's house. There it stretches out, nearly three times as large as the whole of England. The shores are sandy and barren. The sand moves and shifts with the wind, and the sea itself looks like pale liquid sand, muddy and livid.

There are tempests here, when the sky looks grey and sickly, and the sand is whirled about to and fro.

Look close at the shore. Do you see how horrid? Crowds and crowds of black beetles crawling about. If a hut is built there they crawl up it, and come dropping down inside like living rain. And the Caspian is very witch-like and weird, for at night you may see the water burn! That is, there is oil on the top of it which sometimes catches fire. The oil is petroleum, and it comes out of the rocks around.

Now down with our balloon. Like Beauty, we have done looking at the Beast's house, and we must see what it makes of him, and what he makes of it.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE GLORIOUS PEOPLE.

THE people who first lived in Russia were not what we call Russians at all.

They were all a sort of cousins to each other, of the Ugrian family, some Fins, some Laps, some Votiaks, and many other strange names. They lived in the north by hunting and catching fish; and they drove about in sledges dragged by reindeer. They were funny squat little men, dressed in skins, and lived in little wooden huts.

Further south, near the Black Sea, were other tribes. The Greeks, who had cities on the coasts, told odd stories about them, and called them Scythians. Some were warlike, and loved fighting, others tilled the ground, and others again had flocks. The Greeks knew most about the warlike tribes, and they said that their god was a sword stuck in a clod of earth. They were strong people, with brown or yellow hair, and long beards. They loved fighting and bloody deeds.

No one knew much about these tribes in the

great country of Russia. The Greeks said that up in the north were people who had only one eye, and others with bald heads and snub noses, and that in their land the air was always full of feathers, and there was darkness and no light. That shows that in some matters they used their eyes, and in others their imaginations.

These tribes lived on quietly till about three hundred years after Christ was born. But farther away over the Ural Mountains matters were going on that concerned them very much. The great family of the Sarmatians, who lived there, were having a disturbance among themselves.

So great was this disturbance, that one tribe of this family would go on living there no longer, and marched off towards the Ural Mountains, to cross them and find another home. The name of this tribe was the Glorious People, or in their language, the Slavs. They were going to come and live in Russia and be the Russians.

So this Glorious People came pouring over the Urals. They were tall fair men and women, with brown hair and grey eyes for the most part. All on foot and all very bold. They were sunburnt and muddy and dusty with their long journeys. Nothing stopped them. When they came to rivers they threw themselves in and swam across, or carried their children over in rough boats.

The fighting tribes came first, and made way for the others. Even these were a little frightened by the Greek fortresses and the even files of soldiers which they came to on the coast. For these Slavs rushed on to battle anyhow, shouting their war-cry. They carried heavy bucklers and sabres, and short spears and poisoned arrows. As they came along, the people in the villages were afraid, and fled from their houses.

These Slavs were cunning as well as brave. When they were lying in wait for an enemy, they would sometimes lie for hours under water in a stream, breathing through a long reed in their mouths that reached up to the air. They ate raw meat, so their food was little trouble.

On rushed these warlike Slavs through the steppes and the rich plains, and into the forest. As they came forward the other tribes drew back before them, up to the north and the east. At last the foremost tribe came near to the shores of the Baltic. There on the Neva, near the Valdai Hills, they settled down, and built themselves huts, with many doors, that they might escape easily.

After this fighting tribe came many others. Some had flocks, and some tilled the ground. All could fight, but not so well as the first tribe.

These did not take the trouble to go further up. Some settled down on the Dnieper among the rich

plains, and there they built Kief. Others went into the forests on the Volga. Others stayed lower down on the grass of steppes where they could feed their flocks.

But you remember that the Dnieper and the Neva and the Volga all rose near together. So these tribes could easily meet, and exchange things with one another, and hold together.

These Slavs became the Russians themselves.

There they lived, and grew up, and learned. Only it takes a very long time for a tribe to grow up. Still, when two hundred years had passed by, there was a great change to be seen in them.

When they first came into Russia they had had no governments. The father had been the head of the family, and made the family obey him, but that was all. He made the women obey him like slaves. The women were not much thought of. The old Slav name for a woman is "a live shovel or broom."

Presently, however, they began to find that it was awkward not to have a government. For when one family quarrelled with another, there was no one who could settle the dispute. Also there was no one who could divide the land between the different families.

So they arranged that all the heads of the families should meet together and arrange these matters, and they called the meeting the Mir. All the land



belonged to the Mir, that is, to the whole village in general. The Mir divided it up into little lots of land, and gave one lot to each person. There was a fresh division every three years or so.

This Mir was a great and wonderful institution. It is lasting still.

The heads of the different Mirs in villages near one another used to meet together about two or three times a year at the nearest town, and there settle all the affairs between village and village. This meeting was called the Volost. In this little town, too, they had their idols, and they went there to offer sacrifice.

They had learned, too, to grow millet and grain, and eat it, and to drink milk.

Just as people like to have photographs of their friends at different ages, and see what they looked like, so we will have another look at the Slavs when they have been another hundred years in Russia.

They have learned more about dressing themselves. The women make themselves quite grand, with long dresses, and glass beads and bits of metal for ornaments. The men dress in long trousers in summer, and in winter they have coats of skins.

They still have their curious old feasts and songs. When a man dies they often kill his wife and slaves to bury with him.

They have learned music, and they dance. One day when the Greeks attacked them, they conquered the Slavs easily, for they were all fallen asleep with listening to a harper. Though that does not look as if they cared for music particularly, it shows that it had some effect on them.

Now for our last photograph before we begin the real story of our Russians. This is two hundred years later again; that is, five hundred years since they came to Russia.

Now the men who fight are separated from the men who do not fight. There are many fighting men. Those who are the strongest and bravest are a kind of commanders of the rest, and are called *boyards*, that is, the fighters. Each tribe has its chief, but he is only the head of the boyards.

The other people, who do not fight, till the ground, and go trading with their skins in Greek cities. They have learned many things from the Greeks: how to make their idols of metal, and how to paint them. Besides these people there are slaves, who are prisoners taken in battle.

Now for the gods they believed in.

The greatest and oldest of their gods was called The Shiner. He was so great that he did nothing, but reposed quietly, and let the other gods do all things. His two children were the Sun-god and the Fire-god.

But the most important god of all was Perun, the Thunderer. His power was great and terrible. The Slavs said that once, long ago, the world had been a little egg, but that Perun had made the heat of his lightnings to shine upon it, and it grew and grew, larger and larger, and then out came land and sea upon it, and the trees burst out, and the grass grew, and the birds flew out of it, and animals sprang forth, and so it became our earth. And all that was done by Perun.

There was nothing he could not do. He could strike down trees, and destroy evil-willed clouds that were bent on doing harm. When the lightnings pierced the clouds in the spring, and made them pour out rain, they said that Perun was going abroad in his fiery car, and was piercing the demons—that is, the clouds—as he went with his fiery darts, so that the blood streamed from their wounds. Sometimes Perun travelled on a millstone, flying in the air, carried by the mountain spirits. He stood upright on it, with his black hair and golden beard streaming on the wind, and in his hand he carried his great club.

In the spring the Russians used to hold sacrifices, and then they prayed to Perun, and said: "Perun, father! give thy blessing on the plough and on the corn. Let golden straw, with well-filled ears, rise up as plentifully as rushes. Drive away all

black hail-clouds, and give sunshine and gentle rain."

They sang, too, many songs about Perun's doings, and what a great and generous god he was. This is one of their songs—

Perun drove across the sea,  
To marry a maid across the sea.  
Sun followed with a dowry,  
Giving gifts to all the woods :  
To the Oak a golden girdle,  
To the Maple motley gloves.

They told how one day the Sun's daughter went to a spring to wash her golden cups ; but the spring drowned her. Then Perun struck the spring to its depths and dried it up.

Perun had a wonderful golden key. With it he used to unlock the hidden treasures of the earth, gold and silver. He unlocked, too, wonderful waters. One water was called dead water, the other living water.

If the dead water was put on the wounds of a dead man, the wounds healed, but he was still dead. Then if the living water was put on his lips, he sat up with a shiver, and said, " How long I have been asleep !"

Perun's golden key could stop the flow of blood from wounds. Even now among some of the Russian peasants, if any one's nose bleeds, they let



the blood drop through a closed padlock as a sign of Perun's key. Perhaps, too, that is why a key is put down children's backs now to stop nose-bleeding. You do not know how much the ideas about those old gods and others like them mingle in our old customs.

Sometimes the Russians said that Perun died, and floated about in a coffin of dark clouds and mists until the spring brought him to life again.

The people honoured Perun very much, as you may think, for his power, and they had many images of him. Among others, there was a great statue on a hill, near a city called Kief, about which you will presently hear a great deal. It was made of silver, with a golden beard. In its hand it held a yellow stone, shaped like the lightning, and before it burned an oakwood fire. If by chance the fire went out, it was lighted again by striking sparks from the stone.

One of Perun's names in the very oldest times used to be Voloss; but, as time went on, the Slavs began to think that Voloss was a different person to Perun, and they said he was a god that took care of the cattle. When they swore oaths they swore by Perun and Voloss.

Perun had a sister called Lado, who was the goddess of light, and about her they sang many songs, though we know very little of what they thought about her.

There were many other gods. There was a god called Swifteye, who had huge eyebrows, and such heavy eyelids that he could not open them himself, but they were lifted up with pitchforks. But as soon as they were open the look of his eyes turned all he looked at to stone and ashes.

But there is not space to tell you about all these. Some day perhaps you may read for yourselves about them,—about the White God, with a long white beard, who helps travellers to find their way; and about the Black God, whose dwelling is always dark, and many others.

But for all that the Slavs thought that they knew so much about the gods and their doings, they had very few ideas about the place to which the spirits of the dead went. They seem often to have thought that the souls of the dead had to cross a deep sea to reach the far-off land. So they buried or burnt their dead, in coffins shaped like boats, and put money into their cold hands to pay for the journey.

Some said that the soul had to climb up a steep hill. So if the nails of a corpse were cut, the parings were put into the coffin, that the soul might use them to climb with. Sometimes, too, they put small leather ladders into the coffin to help the soul out of the grave.

What the land was like that the souls reached at

last the old Slavs did not know. They thought that they lived there as they had lived on earth, only the sun shone always, and there was no night. Some said that it was a lovely land, where the sun went when his day's work was over, and where the souls of little children played about among green trees, and gathered golden fruits. No cold winds blew there, and winter never came; but when the swallows and other birds left Russia in the autumn, men said that they had gone to this land in the east.

They told stories of many other things about the soul; different tribes had different stories. One thing they all agreed in: that the souls of the dead came back to their homes, often as butterflies, but sometimes in no visible shape, and there they watched over their children, and their children's children.

So they would put food for their ancestors' souls, and worshipped them, in a manner. And because the great thing they thought about in the long cold winters was the comfort of the fire, they began to think that these souls lived near the fire. Even now, when a Russian peasant changes his house, he carries some of his fire with him in a jar. For he thinks that the spirits of his fathers will come with him. When they thought so much about these spirits that lived near the fire, they began to think that the fire had a spirit to itself. They called the



spirit the Domovoy, and said it watched over the house, and took care of it. Later on there grew to be many stories about this Domovoy, and how he was a little hairy old man in a blue dress. But this the old Slavs did not think.

Besides these, they believed in many other spirits; and because they had much to do with the forests, and often lost their way when they thought they were going right, and heard the strange sound of the wind among the trees, and saw the odd dark shadows, they thought that here too there were spirits who wandered about and did mischief. They called them *Lyeshies*, and said that they were hairy men, with hoofs and horns and long claws, and that they fought with forest trees for clubs.

Then there were the water-spirits, the *Rusalkas*. These were girls, some tall and quite grown up, and some quite little girls about seven years old. They had dresses of green water-weeds, and long green hair, from which water dripped. If their hair grew dry they died. They lived under the water, and dragged in people sometimes with their long thin arms; but they never looked happy. They wandered about and moaned.

I cannot tell you now of the magicians they believed in; and the ogresses with iron teeth, whose houses were made of men's bones, and the lock human jaws; and how once an ogress was outwitted



by a little girl with a clever doll that could speak ; and of the horrid fat old men that live in the water ; and of the babies that live with them, and are white and pretty. Some day you may read these. How old those stories are, and if these old Slavs knew them, we cannot quite tell. Anyhow they had stories rather like them, and as the Russians grew more numerous and more clever, they made out these stories from the old ones for themselves.

## CHAPTER III.

### HOW THE RUSSIANS GOT THEIR NAME.

BUT the time was coming when the Slav tribes round Novgorod should change their name, and become at last—Russians.

This was how it fell out. Up to the north-west of the city Novgorod there lived a race of men who were not Slavs but Norse. They were as tall as palm-trees, so men said, and carried huge shields of skins, as tall as themselves. They too had boyards, and princes who were heads over the boyards, and they loved to fight their neighbours; and one of the strongest and bravest tribes was the tribe of Rus.

So one day it came to pass that these Varangians, as the Slavs called them, of the tribe of Rus, came down over the plains near Novgorod, and conquered the Glorious People who lived there.

At that the Glorious People were a little ashamed. And to cover their shame, they made up stories and songs, in which they said that the Slavs had asked the Varangians to come and reign over them.

This was the story they told. They said that they themselves had grown tired of fighting, and longed for peace, and wanted a prince who would rule them well. Then they heard of three brothers, princes of the tribe of Rus, who lived in Norway, and were strong and brave. So they sent a messenger to these princes, and the message was, "Our land is large and fruitful, but it lacks order and justice: come and govern us, and be our ruler."

Then, so goes the story, Rurik the king and his two brothers came in answer to the message. Rurik the king built towns on the banks of Lake Ilmen. And at Novgorod he built a castle, and there he lived and ruled. And from the name of his tribe, Rus, the Slavs were called Russians.

Two of his boyards, said the Russians, Askold and Dir by name, conquered a city called Kief, on the banks of the Dnieper. There they set up a kingdom for themselves.

Kief is like the yolk of the egg that is to feed the Russians. There the nation is going to form itself and to grow mighty, till the very Greeks tremble before its kings.

We cannot quite tell how much is true and how much false about those early men. But if Rurik and the rest were not real men, the real men were very like them.

After Rurik died, Oleg, his next brother, came to the throne.

Oleg was fierce and brave. He determined that Ashold and Dir should not rule at Kief. But he feared their army was stronger than his, so he made up his mind to take them by craft. Then he dressed himself and his nephew Igor, Rurik's son, in the dress of Norwegian merchants. Then with some soldiers he rowed right under the hill where stood the mud walls of Kief.

Next he sent a message to Askold and Dir: "Askold and Dir, princes of Kief, down below, by the river, are some Norwegian merchants who have come from Greece. Come and see them, for they are your fellow-countrymen."

When Askold and Dir heard that, their heart yearned to see Norse faces. So they hurried down to the bank of the river. But the moment they reached the beach, out rushed the warriors of Oleg and seized them. And Oleg said mockingly, "You are not princes, nor the sons of princes; here stands the son of Rurik," and he pointed to Igor.

At his words the warriors struck down Askold and Dir, and killed them with their spears. Then they buried them on the mountain. Those were the ways of the early men,—craft, and cunning, and treachery.

Oleg went up the hill into Kief, and took posses-

sion of it. As he looked down, and saw the fruitful country round Kief, and the river flowing beneath, he said, "Henceforth Kief shall be the mother of Russian cities."

Oleg grew bolder after he had conquered Kief. He conquered many other tribes, and forced them to give him tribute. Not tribute of money, for they had none, but skins, or corn, or whatever their land brought forth.

At last he grew bold enough to lead his army against the mighty Constantinople. That was a great city with stone palaces and houses, and beautiful statues, and wonderful old manuscripts. Oleg knew nothing about all those, but he wished to conquer and grow mighty.

So with a hundred boats, and forty men in each, he rowed down the Dnieper. At the cataracts (which Dnieper made in his bad temper) they had to get out and drag their boats by land. The wild tribes on the banks fought against them from time to time; but they went on bravely. At last they reached the Black Sea. They sailed across it to the very gates of Constantinople. Then they turned against the villages round about it and burned them up. That was to terrify the Greeks in the city.

The Greeks were in great fear. They, too, tried cunning, and offered Oleg's men poisoned food when they came to treat for peace. But Oleg was still



more cunning, for he had forbidden the men to eat the Greeks' food. At last peace was made. It was agreed that the Greeks should pay Oleg sums of money, and that the Russians might live and trade in Constantinople. Only they were not to come armed nor in large bands.

Then Oleg in his pride nailed his shield to the great gate of the city, called the Golden Door, and went back to Kief.

The people at Kief thought that a man could not have done what Oleg had done. So they said he had magic power. They told all kinds of strange stories about his doings at Constantinople. They said that he had put his boats on wheels, and the wind had driven them against the gates of the city. All the tribes about feared him yet more. But a magician had told Oleg that he would soon die, and that the gods said his death would come through a favourite horse of his. Oleg feared the decrees of the gods, and he rode the horse no more. Presently it died.

Then Oleg went to look at its corpse. As he looked he said scornfully, "There lies my death," and, laughing, he kicked the horse's head with his foot. Then out of the skull crept a serpent, and stung Oleg's foot, so that he died. When the people heard it they sighed, and shed tears for the mighty Oleg.

Then Igor, Rurik's son, ruled the country. In his

time there came from the east a great giant race of men, called the Patzinaks. They pastured sheep and cattle, and plundered their neighbours. They fought with lances and bows and arrows, and could swim well.

Igor made friends with these tribes. With their men and his own he too went against Constantinople, hoping to win glory like Oleg. But the Greeks threw burning oil on his ships, and he was beaten, and went back to Kief.

The next year he took heart and came again. That time he conquered, and agreed with the Emperor that the Greeks should give him large sums of money. This was how the men of Kief swore to keep their side of the agreement. They went up to where the gold and silver statue of Perun stood, near Kief, and there they laid down their battle-arms and gold, and made their oaths.

One day Igor's boyards said to him, "We have no fine clothes like the men of other princes. Go and conquer the tribes, and force them to give us what we want."

Igor was afraid that his boyards would turn against him if he refused their request. So he led them against the Drevlians, a tribe that lived near by. And they conquered the Drevlians, and took from them many fine robes. Then they turned go back to Kief.

On the way back Igor thought that it was a pity that he had not taken more. So he sent his army on, and he and a few boyards returned quietly to the Drevlians to take more. When the Drevlians saw them coming they said to each other, "When a wolf attacks sheep, he will destroy the whole flock if he is not killed." And by the wolf they meant Igor, and by the flock they meant themselves.

So when Igor and his men reached the city, the Drevlians took them prisoner, and put them to death. It is said that they killed Igor by tying him to two young trees which they bent down to the earth and then let fly again. Thus Igor died for his greediness of gold.

Igor's son was called Sviatoslav. That is no longer a Norse name, like Igor, but a real Slav name. Sviatoslav was only a few months old, so his mother Olga ruled for him.

She was a good and wise queen in many ways. We should call her cruel too, and treacherous; only men thought differently then. She took fearful revenge for the death of Igor. This was Olga's revenge.

The Drevlians said among themselves, "Now that Igor is dead, we will send our prince to marry Olga, and so her kingdom will become ours." So they sent messengers to her, who said, "We killed your

husband because he was a ravening wolf, full of cruelty. Come now and marry our prince."

When Olga heard that, she was glad at heart. For she had feared to lead an army against the Drevlians, and she felt that now the day of her revenge had come.

So she answered the messengers with soft words: "It is true that my weeping and wailing cannot give back life to my husband. Your message pleases me. But now let me treat you with honour. Go back to your ships, and in the morning I will send my people to you, and they shall carry you up on their shoulders to the palace, for the honour I wish to show you."

Then the Drevlians went back to their boats well pleased. But during that night Olga made her people dig a deep trench in front of her palace at the entering of the town. And in the morning she sent down her men from Kief to the Drevlians. And they took the Drevlians' boat on their shoulders, and carried them so. Olga sat watching them, as they came, from the balcony of the palace, and the Drevlians were pleased with the honour she was doing them.

But when the men of Kief reached the trench they suddenly turned the boat over, so that the Drevlians and their boat fell into the trench. Then Olga, watching, cried out, "Well, my dear guests,



does so much honour please you?" And they answered with groans, "Alas! we suffer for the death of Igor." Then Olga bade the men of Kief throw in earth upon them, so that they were buried alive.

That was not all her revenge. She killed many others in cunning ways. She conquered one city, and only asked from them three sparrows and three pigeons for each house. And they gave them gladly. Then Olga tied lighted tow to their tails, and they flew home again to the roofs of the houses, so that the houses took fire, and the city was burned.

Yet Olga was a great princess. She was the first to think of the peasants, and whether they were happy or not. She went from village to village, hearing complaints and giving judgment. She had no written laws, and some of her laws were very strange. But it was a great thing that the people should have a law at all, and not have to obey simply the will of each great man.

When she died her people all wept for her, and called her Olga the Wise. And they still keep the sledge in which she used to drive from village to village. Perhaps some day you may see it.

Before she died she took a long journey to Constantinople. Sviatoslav was old enough then to rule alone. Olga did not go to conquer, but to see this beautiful, mighty city.



When she reached it she went into the great Christian churches there. She saw the magnificent golden images, and the great size of the churches, and the beautiful vestments of the singers. As she looked she wondered, and felt great awe. She saw, too, how the Emperor of Constantinople himself bowed before the altar. Then she thought that this God must be greater than even Perun, for Perun's altars were only wooden, and the singing and worship were rough and rude.

So she felt that she must become a Christian, and worship this great God. Then she was taught and baptized, and went back to Russia the first Christian princess.

Yet she could persuade none of the Russians to become Christian. Sviatoslav said to her, "Why, if I became a Christian all my men would laugh at me." And as she went on arguing with him, he grew angry and went away, and would hear no more.

Yet, though he would not heed her words, he loved his mother very much, and he thought her so clever that he left all the ruling of the Russians to her. He himself spent his time in going to war, which he loved.

He was a strong man, and as light as a panther, and loved the noise of camps. He was of middle height, with a wide chest and a thick neck. He

had thick eyebrows, and blue eyes, and a flat nose. His beard and moustaches were long and thin, and his head was all shaven, except for one long tuft of hair, which showed that he was a great man. He wore a gold ring in one of his ears, with two pearls and some rubies in it.

When he went to war he would only eat raw meat, and particularly horse-flesh. He could sleep in the saddle, and he rowed his boat himself. When he went to war he sent to his enemies to say, "I am marching against you."

Sviatoslav had a great deal of trouble with the wild tribes round, the Patzinaks and others. Some he conquered, but others, who lived further away, then came into his country, and once came right up to Kief. Olga and Sviatoslav's baby son were there, and were nearly taken.

The Greek Emperor one day asked Sviatoslav to come and help him against the Bulgarians. These were tribes who lived between Constantinople and Kief. Sviatoslav came gladly, for he loved to fight. And with his brave men he conquered the Bulgarians and took their cities.

Then, like many other people, having gained a good thing, he thought he might keep it. So he stayed in Bulgaria. That the Greek Emperor did not like, for he feared that the Russians might grow too strong, and then it would not be convenient to

have them so close. So he sent messengers to Sviatoslav to ask him to go back to Kief. But Sviatoslav's answer was, "Presently I hope to be at Constantinople."

At that the Greek Emperor was troubled and afraid. And to try to terrify Sviatoslav he marched against a city, in which were some of the Russian men, and he took the city and burned it. Then Sviatoslav, in a mighty rage, marched to meet the Greeks near the city Dorostol, and he and his men went into the city, and the Greeks besieged them there.

There were twelve great battles, and though Sviatoslav's men were only 10,000 against 100,000 Greeks, they fought bravely, both men and women. During the night, when the battle stopped, they used to go out of the town and burn their dead by moonlight.

At last there was a very fierce battle. The Russians might have won, but there was a great wind that blew dust into their faces. The Greeks said that Saint Theodore was fighting for them in the wind on a white horse, but the Russians did not see him. They were terribly beaten, and had to ask for peace.

The Emperor then made them promise that they would never invade Constantinople again, but help to defend it. So they swore by Perun and Voloss, saying, "If we do not keep our word, may we

become as yellow as gold, and perish by our own arms." Then they turned to march home, the few that were left.

But the giant Patzinaks had heard of their defeat, and hid themselves in the bushes on the banks of the Dnieper. And as Sviatoslav and his men came rowing up, worn out and weary, they sprang out on them and killed Sviatoslav. Then they cut off his head, and sent the skull to their king as a drinking-cup.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RUSSIA AT SCHOOL.

SVIATOSLAV before he died had made a great mistake. He had divided his kingdom among his three sons. He said, indeed, that the son who reigned at Kief was to be called the Grand Prince, and have a sort of authority over the others. But this did not do away the evil of his mistake. From this time, for centuries, there were disputes and quarrels among the different princes of the Russians.

These three sons quarrelled until two of them were dead. The one that was left was called Vladimir. He came and ruled at Kief alone.

He was a brutal, savage man. His own wife hated him so much that one day when he was asleep she drew near with a dagger to kill him. But he awoke and caught her hand. Then he resolved to kill her. He told her to dress herself in her wedding-robe, and then went to her room to kill her. But at the door his little son met him with a drawn sword, and said, "Father, you are not



alone here." Then Vladimir flung away his sword and called his boyards to advise him. And they told him to pardon the mother for the sake of the child.

We have been hearing all this time how the Russians lived when they were ignorant like babies. Now we shall hear how Russia went to school, and learned many things, and had new rules to obey.

Vladimir was to choose Russia's school for her. For it was priests and teachers of religion who were the Russians' first schoolmasters. They taught them how to behave, and to live like civilised people.

Vladimir had come back victorious from war, and in gratitude to the gods he said that he would sacrifice a human victim to them. He cast lots to choose the victim, and the lot fell on the son of a Varangian or Norseman, who was a Christian.

Then the people went to this Varangian's house, and said to him, "Bring out your son to be sacrificed to the gods." But the Varangian answered, "Your gods are no gods, but only wood: they neither eat nor drink nor sleep. The God whom the Greeks worship, he alone is God. He made the heavens, and the earth, and men. Your gods have made nothing, but are themselves made by human hands. I will not give my son to devils."

When the people heard that they were very angry. They broke into the house, and took the Varangian and his son, and put them both to death. But they told Vladimir all the words that the Varangian had said; and Vladimir was troubled in mind. For he began to think that perhaps the Varangian was right, and that the gods of the Russians were not gods at all.

Yet he remembered that if he was wrong, that did not in itself prove that the Varangian was right. He thought that as there were many religions he had better inquire about all before choosing any. So he sent for Mohammedan, and Jewish, and Christian men, to ask about their religion.

The Mohammedans came before him first. They, you know, believe in one God, and say that Mohammed was God's great prophet. They spoke to him of how beautiful his life after death would be if he became a Mohammedan. And Vladimir heard them well pleased. But presently they told him that if he became one of them he must give up eating pork and drinking wine. At that Vladimir said, "Drinking wine is the pleasure of Russians, and we cannot live without it." And he would hear no more.

Then Jews came to him, and he was well pleased with them, till at last he happened to ask them, "Where is your native land?" Then they answered,

"We are driven out of our native land by the wrath of God." Then Vladimir said, "Do you wish to teach others, who are yourselves so miserable! Do you want us to feel the same punishment?" And he would talk with them no more.

Then at the last came a Greek Christian, a philosopher. He spoke scorn of the Mohammedans and Jews, and he told Vladimir of the life of Christ and the beliefs of the Greek Christians. He explained, too, how these beliefs were different from those of the Roman Church. He told Vladimir that the Patriarch, the head of the Greek Church, lived at Constantinople, and that the Pope, the head of the Roman Church, lived at Rome.

Vladimir did not understand all that, and when the philosopher saw that, he showed him something else. He drew out a picture of the Last Day. On the right side of the picture the good were being taken up to heaven by bright angels; on the other side the evil were being hunted into hell by black ugly demons. Vladimir looked at the picture, and it made him feel that these things were real. Presently he said, "How happy the people must be who are going up on the right hand, and how miserable the sinners at the left!"

Then the philosopher said, "Be baptized, and you will go with the people at the right hand." At that Vladimir thought for a minute or two, and then

said, "I will wait a little." For he felt he had better ask the boyards what they thought.

Vladimir told the boyards all the philosopher had said to him, and he asked them, "What do you think of all that?" The boyards answered, "Of course no one will speak evil of his own religion. If you want to know the truth, send men whom you can trust to the countries of different religions, and let them see what they believe and how they serve God."

What they said pleased Vladimir. So he chose ten prudent and observant men and sent them out.

First they went to the Mohammedan mosques. But the service was poor and mean, and they saw nothing that made them think that this God was greater than their god.

Then they went into Bulgaria. The Bulgarians held Roman Christianity. These envoys did not understand the difference between Roman and Greek Christianity; indeed there was at this time very little difference. But they saw that the churches in Bulgaria were very bare, and the vestments of the priests were not gorgeous. So they thought that this religion was not worth much.

Then they purposed to go to Constantinople. The Greek Emperor was very anxious to make friends with the Russians, and he hoped that they would



become Greek Christians, and so often come in a friendly manner to Constantinople. For this reason he gave orders that the grandest services of the Church were to be shown them.

They were led into the great church of S. Sophia, which shone with different-coloured marbles and jasper, and was gorgeous with gold and rich mosaics. The Patriarch himself marched at the head of the long procession in splendid vestments. Tapers were blazing all round, and sounds of music filled all the church with sweet chanting of voices. The priests swung jewelled censers to and fro, and out of them rose clouds of incense. All the time the envoys watched, half breathless with admiration, though the words were almost the same as those the Bulgarians sang. It was just like judging whether a book is good or not by its binding. Then the long lines of robed deacons and priests with torches in their hands came out from behind the great veil hung across the church, and all the people fell on their knees. Then the envoys were overcome with the beauty, so that they thought they saw angels singing in the air. And they cried out, "We want no more proofs! Send us home again." The Emperor sent them home well pleased.

When they reached home they told Vladimir and the boyards all they had seen. And they said that there was no religion like the Greek religion. For



the foolish people thought that because the services were grander the religion was greater.

When all had been heard, Vladimir asked the boyards whether they would accept the Greek religion. They answered, "Yes;" and added, "If it were not a good one, your grandmother Olga would not have adopted it." So the matter was settled.

So Russia had chosen to go to school. That was a very good thing. But it was a pity that she had not chosen the Roman Church instead of the Greek Church. This for two reasons.

You know that when two children go to school together they get to know each other. Then they talk together, and one learns from the other. All the European nations belonged to the Roman Church. So if Russia had belonged to it too, she would have learned to know the Europeans, and they would have taught her many things. It would not have given her an extra door, but it would have made her eager to go into Europe through the doors she already had. That is the first reason.

You know, too, that the head-master of a school does not only teach his scholars but looks after them also. The Patriarch was like Russia's head-master. But he was not nearly so powerful as the Pope, because he had no great nation under his care, except Russia. So when Russia was conquered by fierce tribes, as she was not long after this, there was no nation he

could call in to help her. If Russia had belonged to the Roman Church, the Pope would have ordered the European nations to help her. That is the second reason.

Vladimir was too proud to ask baptism from the Greeks as a favour. So he laid his plans and collected an army and marched against a Greek city called Kerson, and took it. Then he sent word to the Greek Emperor that he would not give up the city unless he might marry his sister.

The Greek Emperor answered that his sister must not be the wife of a heathen. At that Vladimir was much pleased, for it suited his plans. He replied at once that he was ready to become a Christian.

So Anna, the Greek princess, was sent to him, though she wept, and said she would rather die. Then he was baptized and married, and went back to Russia.

When he reached Kief he assembled the people on the hill where the idols were. There stood the gods of the Day and the Sun, and many others. Vladimir bade his men cast them all down and hew them to pieces and burn the pieces. But the statue of Perun, with its great gold and silver head, was dragged down the steep bank to the shore of the river and thrown in.

Next day Vladimir collected the people and made

them all wade into the Dnieper, while the Greek priest read the Baptismal Service over them. Then he thought it was all right, and that they were Christian.

The people did not like Christianity all at once. They went on telling their old tales of the gods, and fearing them for a long time. When a statue of Perun at Novgorod was thrown into the river, men said that it swam against the stream. And a voice was heard saying, "This for you, O people of Novgorod, in memory of me." And at the same time a rope was thrown up on the bridge. After that for many years the people lashed themselves with ropes on the day of the overthrow of Perun.

But if anything could have made them think that Christianity was better than their old religion, it was the change that came over Vladimir. He became mild and gentle and just. In old days he had tried to kill his wife. Now he would not take the life of a robber, because he feared to sin. At last the Christian priests themselves reminded him that he sinned if he did not keep order in his kingdom, and that for this sometimes it was necessary even to put men to death.

Vladimir grew very fond of learning. He built schools and churches, and had copies of the Bible in the Russian tongue sold and given away about his kingdom.

When he first built the schools, he found that no children would come to them. For their mothers thought that reading and writing were wicked magic arts. Vladimir then commanded the children to come to school, so the mothers were forced to let them go. But they wept very much, and did not like it for a long time. We will hope the children were wiser than their parents.

Besides learning, Vladimir taught the Russians gentler ways and better manners. He gave them many books, and had them taught music and how to paint churches and house-building. At last his boyards grew so grand that they grumbled at having to eat with wooden spoons, and asked for silver ones.

More than this, Christianity taught them to be gentle instead of cruel, just instead of unjust, honourable instead of treacherous.

All these changes, of course, came in quite gradually, like light coming into the room in the morning. The Russians caught sight of one fresh idea after another. And though strange customs and rough ways remained for a long time, the Russians were growing up and learning.

Vladimir did not forget his skill in war. He conquered the great giant Patzinaks, who once nearly took Kief. The people told strange stories about this war. They said that during a war a young boy met a giant Patzinak in single fight



and crushed him to death. But, you see, about this time the priests were teaching them the story of David and Goliath. They were unused to learning, and so they mixed up the two things in their minds.

But Vladimir's reign was drawing to an end. One hot summer he was taken ill, and died. His death was kept secret at first, for reasons that you shall hear presently. His servants cut a hole in the floor, and let his body down into the cellar beneath, and then took it quietly by night to the Church of Our Lady in Kief. But the people found it out and came to the church. There they wept and wailed for Vladimir. For they forgot his early cruelty, and only thought of his good deeds since his baptism, and how he had conquered the Patzinaks.

Vladimir had said that the kingdom was to be divided among his nine sons. But Boris, his favourite, was to be Grand Prince of Kief, though he was not the eldest.

Boris refused to be Grand Prince, as he did not think he had any right to Kief. So Sviatopolk, another of his brothers, seized Kief, and made himself Grand Prince.

But he was afraid that the people would go over to Boris. That was why Vladimir's death was kept secret. For Boris was gentle and honourable, and the people loved him. So Sviatopolk managed to turn Boris's own guards against him. One morning,



when he was singing matins, the guards rushed in and pierced him through and through with their spears, and carried him off, still alive, wrapped in a tent-cloth. Sviatopolk sent his own boyards to see if he was dead. They, seeing he still breathed, pierced him through the heart and killed him.

Now Boris had a brother whom he loved dearly, whose name was Gleb. Sviatopolk was afraid of Gleb too. So he sent treacherous messages to him, and asked him to come to Kief because his father was ill.

Gleb did not know his father was dead; and because he was truthful himself, and very tender-hearted, he set out towards Kief. On the way messengers met him, and told him, "Vladimir is dead, and Sviatopolk has taken Kief, and has killed Boris your brother."

At that Gleb cried out for sorrow, above all, that Boris was dead. While he was weeping, murderers sent by Sviatopolk came up behind him and killed him. Then his servants took up the body, and carried it to where Boris's corpse was buried. Then with tears they laid him by Boris's side. Afterwards they called the brothers St. Boris and St. Gleb, because of their saintly lives and the love they had to each other. And in battles the Russians often thought that they saw them in the sky fighting for Russia.

When Sviatopolk heard that Gleb too was dead he was glad at heart. But he little thought that vengeance was coming close.

Jaroslav, another brother, who was Prince of Novgorod, heard of these two murders. He and the people of Novgorod were very angry. They collected an army and marched against Kief.

Then there were bloody battles between the two brothers. At last Jaroslav forced Sviatopolk to fly.

Sviatopolk was ill, and he was carried away in haste from the battle-field. But he was mad with fright, and thought at each step that Jaroslav was coming up with him. If by chance his men stopped for an instant, he cried out, "Ah! ah! they are pursuing me. Look, there they are! Fly! fly!" At length he reached the deserts, and there he died. That was the end of Sviatopolk the murderer.

These are sad, dark stories. But sadder, darker days are coming presently,—days when the Russians did not know where to turn for help, and the land was full of misery and evil deeds.

Those days did not come till Jaroslav died. He reigned at Kief happily and prosperously. He was the greatest sovereign that Russia had yet had. He was not so great in war as the other princes had been; but he was greater than they, for whereas they spent their time in killing their enemies, he helped his friends.

There were a few wars. There were wild tribes like the Patzinaks who fought him. Besides that, there were wars with Poland. Do you remember in the first chapter how some of the Slavs settled down to the south of the Baltic? and how I said that these Slavs quarrelled with the Russians, and prevented them from going through to Europe? Those Slavs were the Poles, and lived in Poland. There were others near them, called the Lithuanians. These joined the Poles, and fought against Russia.

There was a Greek war also. In that the Russian fleet was destroyed by a storm.

But now for Jaroslav's real work.

He was the first to write down the laws of Russia. And he called them the Russian Right.

They are strange, odd laws—Norse laws, as Rurik and his sons were Norse. These are some of them: Murderers and thieves were not always to be punished, but were to pay a sum of money instead. A murderer was not pursued and taken by public officers as now. The relations of the murdered man tracked him out, and either killed him, or took money to pay for his crime. When a Russian had cause of complaint against another, he summoned him to go before the prince, or one of the judges appointed by the prince. With the judge there was a jury of twelve men, and these and

the judge listened to the whole story, and gave judgment.

But if both sides disliked the judgment, then they settled matters by a fight. The relations of the two men formed a ring round them, and then they fought. Generally they fought with swords, and the one whose sword cut sharpest was the victor. When the fight was over, the victor could pass what sentence he liked upon the other.

Sometimes when a man was accused of a crime he had to prove his innocence in one of two ways. He carried red-hot iron on the back of his hand for three steps, or plunged his hand into boiling water. Then the hand was wrapped up, and the bandage sealed by the judge. After three days the bandage was taken off again. Then if the wound had healed, and no mark remained, the man was declared innocent.

There was no capital punishment, no cruel deaths, no torture to make men confess, no beating, and no public prisons, in Jaroslav's time.

But at the same time the Christian priests began to bring in different laws. They would not allow money to be paid for a murder. For they said it was an offence against God, and the murderer must suffer death, according to the Jewish law. Besides this, they brought in Greek laws, which were far more cruel than Russian laws: flogging and hard labour,



and torture and imprisonment, and the cutting off sometimes of the hands and feet of a prisoner.

There was one bad law which they tried to alter. They tried to prevent the judgment by red-hot iron and boiling water; for that, you can see, was a foolish judgment. They did not get these laws written down in the Russian Right. But sometimes these were followed, and sometimes the Russian Right, until the times of Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible.

Jaroslav built the first school in Russia. It was to hold three hundred children. He also built many new cities.

But the city that he made most beautiful was Kief, the mother of Russian cities. Round it he built ramparts; and the houses inside were built taller, and of two stories, often with a paling round them. Inside, he divided the city into eight parts, so that the Slavs and Norsemen and foreign merchants might live with their own countrymen in the different parts of the town.

Many merchants came to Russia in the time of Jaroslav. His name was well known in Europe. For one of his daughters had married Harold the Brave, King of Norway, and another was the wife of the King of France. One of his sons married the daughter of our King Harold. Besides this, he gave shelter to St. Olaf and his son, as you will read in



the story of Norway. So many merchants came from these countries, till the Dnieper was covered with their ships.

The most glorious church that Jaroslav built was the church of St. Sophia in Kief. He had built four hundred churches, but this was the grandest of all. Many Greek artists came to build these churches.

This St. Sophia shone like the sun inside ; for her vaults and pillars and walls were covered with gold. On one wall was a mosaic in rich colours of the Last Supper. That you may perhaps see for yourselves some day. The singers and the priests were taught by the Greeks.

But even the most glorious reign must come to an end. And about ten years before William the Conqueror came over to England Jaroslav the Great died.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FIRST TROUBLES.

Do you remember in the first chapter that I said that Russia was like a child that puts its hand into the fire because it has never been taught that fire burns? Yet the fire burns it all the same.

And so the Russians were to pay the price of their king's mistake. There were now many little kingdoms, and because of that there was misery and war. And there was one arrangement that made it worse. When the Grand Prince, the eldest of a family, died, the next eldest moved to Kief, and became Grand Prince. Then the next eldest to him moved into the kingdom he had left, and so on. Thus you see the ruler of each little kingdom was constantly changed.

So there was much discontent and bad ruling. For the people of each state never had time to grow fond of their ruler; nor did they care to, for they knew he would not be with them long. And their ruler troubled little about their welfare, or the beauty of their cities. For he never knew how soon he might leave them, nor who might follow

him. So all the kingdoms were neglected and miserable.

Thus Russia went gradually down into a gulf of misery and fighting, and evil of all sorts.

In her good days she was like a fleet of little boats—different tribes—sailing happily and prosperously together, in sunshiny weather, with flags flying. Now in these sad times it is as if a storm had come on, and the sky had grown black, and the waves rough. Then the ships break up and part, or are driven by the waves against each other, so that one and another sink. That is Russia in these hard times,—kingdom striking against kingdom, so that sometimes one is destroyed. Kief, the mother of Russian cities, went down in these rough times. She came up again, but her greatness was gone and her glory dimmed.

What shall we see when the storm is over? Broken masts, torn flags, battered boats. Broken powers, ruined beauty, wrecks of kingdoms.

Terrible things were done in these sad days, things that I hardly like to tell you. Brother fought against brother, father against son. There were treachery and lies and murders.

This is the sort of thing that happened. One prince drove another out of Kief. Then the exiled prince called in the help of the Polovtsi, wild barbarians like the Patzinaks. These overran the

country, and burned the peasants' houses and their corn-fields. But the exiled prince cared nothing for that. It served his turn. At last he was murdered on a dark night by murderers sent by his brother.

There was once a prince that loved his fatherland, and tried to drive out the barbarians and make peace. His name was Vassilko. But he died sadly. His cousin seized him treacherously, and sent him away in a cart, loaded with fetters. His eyes were put out, and so he died.

Once it seemed as if these princes were growing weary of war. For six princes met together, after about forty years of war, and they declared that they would live together with single hearts in friendship, and that they would protect Russia. This they swore, and kissed the Cross as they spoke their oaths. Then they parted and went home. But so weak is human nature, that next year they were at war together again as fiercely as before.

False oaths were often taken. One prince swore a great oath and kissed the Cross. Next day he broke his oath. He was reproached with breaking it, but he only sneered, and said, "It was such a little Cross."

Little by little the learning and the better manners and the foreign trade were all lost to Russia. Grass grew in the churches and the schools, and their

walls crumbled away. It seemed as if all the good that Vladimir and Jaroslav had done to Russia was no lasting good at all.

Yet one set of people, whom Vladimir had brought to Russia, now showed how good they were. These were the Christian priests. All through this sad time they were faithful to their work. They comforted and helped and taught the poor miserable peasants.

In one thing they were very wise. They knew well that the people would not give up their old heathen songs and stories and feast-days. So very cleverly they changed the names of the gods of whom they sang into names of Christian apostles and saints.

Here is a song, for instance. The people used to sing it about the Goddess of the Harvest, who made the land fruitful, and Perun, who blessed the corn. But the Christian priests changed the names, and for Perun they said God, and for the goddess the Mother of God, and for the helper of Perun they said St. Peter.

So the song ran like this :—

“ A golden plough goes ploughing  
Afield in the fertile lands ;  
At the plough is the Lord Himself ; by Him  
The holy Peter stands ;  
And the Mother of God holds corn for sowing.”



When the people sang it, they learned to think that God blessed them, and not Perun.

But a man was coming presently to the throne of Kief who was to give Russia a few years of rest. He showed the Russians hopefully that, even in those evil, bad times, men could be pure and upright and unselfish.

Before we come to him I want to tell you a little about the story of the great city Novgorod.

The chief thing for you to remember about it is its splendid pride. It stood on the Neva, in sandy, marshy land where little would grow. There were often famine and pestilence there, but nothing could bend the pride of the old city of Rurik.

So great did the men of Novgorod think their city, that they called it, as I said, "My Lord Novgorod," and the saying went among them, "Who can equal God and the great Novgorod?"

My Lord Novgorod was ruled by a great council of all the citizens called the Vetché. The head of this council was called the Possadnik. The councillors were summoned together by the great bell of Novgorod, and met on the bridge of the Neva, and the army formed of citizens belonged to them. They had full power to judge and sentence. The Possadnik told news to the Vetché, and conducted the business. He asked questions as to what was to be done, to which the members of the Vetché shouted

out Yes or No. Then, if more said Yes than said No, there was quarrelling and disputing among the council until every one agreed to say the same. If they could not agree, the two sides fought on the bridge, and sometimes one side drowned the other in the river.

That seems a strange way of doing business, and as if Novgorod would not long remain one city. But the pride that all the citizens felt in My Lord Novgorod held them together.

Besides the Possadnik there was always a Prince of Novgorod. He was called Prince, but he had very little power. My Lord Novgorod invited whom he liked to come and rule.

Once when a prince wanted to come, against the will of the citizens, they said, "Send him here if he has a spare head." When a prince came they told him very plainly what he might and what he might not do. He was to swear to keep the laws of Jaroslav. He was allowed a certain amount of money, paid by the different quarters of the town. Also he had the fines paid by criminals.

He could not own any villages in the country round Novgorod. And he could not order even the harvests to be reaped at his own will. He lived by the church of Novgorod, at the right side of the river, and had his boyards and councillors, and his own army.

If in anything he displeased the citizens, they "made him a bow, and showed him the way out of Novgorod." And very difficult it was to find the way in again after My Lord Novgorod had shut the door upon him.

The Novgorod people took very little part in these terrible civil wars. They went on choosing their own prince, and doing what they liked, up to the time when a certain great man became Grand Prince. The city had its own songs and stories and books, and an archbishop of its own. They had their own heroes, and told how Vassili the boyard had fought on the bridge up to his knees in blood.

Besides all this greatness My Lord Novgorod was very rich. The citizens told fairy stories, to show how rich it was, about a merchant who went down to the sea-king, and brought up great treasure, but not so great as the treasure of Novgorod.

There were many other republics. Pskof, a city not far from Novgorod, was one of them. The men of Pskof tried to think that their city was as great as Novgorod, and they called it My Lord Pskof. But when My Lord Pskof and My Lord Novgorod met in battle, it was pretty plain which was the stronger of the two.

Now for the one good prince in this evil time. Vladimir-Monomachus is his name. He was very different from other men of his time. He was

truthful, and never broke his oath, even with the savage tribes who overran Russia, though every one else thought that a promise made to them was no promise at all.

One day Vladimir-Monomachus and his army marched up to the very gates of Kief to punish the Grand Prince for his cruelty to Vassilko. But the men of Kief, who were starved and broken by war, came out and begged him with tears not to bring fighting again inside their city. And Vladimir-Monomachus had such a tender heart that he turned away and did not make war on Kief.

The men of Kief never forgot the pity he showed them. So when their prince died they begged him to come and rule them. At first Vladimir-Monomachus refused, for he hated fighting, and he knew well that he would have to fight if he came to Kief.

But the men of Kief, to show how eager they were, plundered the houses of the Jews who lived in the city, because they had been favoured by their last prince. Poor Jews! But it is not so different now. Then Vladimir-Monomachus could refuse no longer. It was well for Russia that he did not.

The first thing that this new king did, who was to bring Russia peace, and teach her that fellowship was worth more than many kingdoms, was to move the bodies of Boris and Gleb to a finer tomb. As the



procession went along, such crowds came to follow it that Vladimir had to scatter furs and gold to them to clear the way.

And as they watched the bier borne on high, they thought how gentle and good Boris and Gleb had been. They thought how they had cared nothing for power, but only for peace and good-fellowship. And they had been the first to suffer from the evilness of this evil time. When these thoughts came into their minds, and they saw Vladimir-Monomachus leading the procession, they said to each other, "This new king will be like the holy brothers Boris and Gleb. Let us help him to give peace to our country."

So Monomachus reigned. He was brave in war as well as gentle at home. He drove back the barbarian Polovtsi, and weakened their strength. And he gave to the poor worn-out Russians twelve years of rest.

He did more than that. He added to the Russian Right a law about debtors and creditors. For he found that in Kief the Jew money-lenders had asked for far too high an interest.

He built up churches again and schools. He built also one new city, and called it Vladimir. He did not neglect to make friends with other countries, for he married the daughter of King Harold of England.

He did much for the peasants. That was why



he fought the barbarians, as he said, "that the Polovtsi might not come and pierce the peasants with arrows, and carry off, not only their horses, but also their wives and children."

Have you ever quarrelled, and cried with anger till you felt hot and restless and miserable? And has any one then ever come and put the quarrel right, and taught you gently to be sorry and to be good again? That was what Vladimir-Monomachus did for Russia.

All did not go smoothly in his reign. There was a famine in the land, and a great fire at Kief. But the men of Kief loved him, and felt safe in his hands. For they trusted him, and knew he would do the best for them. So the land had peace.

At last the time for Vladimir's death came near. When he felt that he was going to die, he wrote down rules for his children to follow. But at the beginning these were the words he wrote, being a humble man, and one who thought little of himself: "I am drawing near the grave; you, my dear children, and all who read this, listen carefully to these precepts, and if your heart does not find them good, then do not think I meant amiss, but say to yourselves, 'He was an old man, and his mind was getting a little weak.'"

Then he wrote, "The groundwork of all virtues is the fear of God and the love of man. Neither

fasting nor being a monk can give you life eternal, but well-doing alone. Do not forget the poor, but succour them, and give them of your wealth.

"Do not bury your riches in the ground, for a Christian should not do that. Be a father to orphans, and hear the cause of widows, and do not let the strong oppress the weak. Never put any man to death, either innocent or guilty, for nothing is more sacred than the life and the soul of a Christian. Never take God's name in vain, nor break an oath when you have kissed the Cross as a pledge."

Then again: "Drive pride away from your heart, and remember that we shall perish; to-day full of life, to-morrow in the shroud. Abhor lying, drunkenness, and loose living. In time of war be vigilant. This is not the time to dream of feasts and of softness. Respect foreigners, and learn their languages. My father knew five. Mind that you are on your horse in good time, when you are at war, to guard against surprises. When you are on horseback say your prayers often from time to time; or at least say the shortest and best of all, 'Lord, have mercy on us.' When you wake at sunrise, praise God, as my father did, saying in the joy of your heart, 'Light me, O my God, with Thy divine light.'"

Then he went on to tell them of all the wars he had fought, and how he had been in eighty-three battles, and made peace nineteen times with the

Polovtsi, and how he had caught wild horses, and ridden fast through the forests, and fought with stags and elands.

Then he ended up: "I broke my head, I wounded my arms and legs, but the Lord watched over me. And you, my children, do not fear death nor wild beasts, but be brave at all times. The protection of Heaven is above all the care that man can take."

We must leave him now. As soon as he was dead there was a terrible fresh outbreak of war over all the country, and evil deeds were done in all parts.

There was a strong prince at Kief, Andrew by name, and he for a time conquered the kingdoms and won them, but he could not keep them or give Russia peace.

Alas for Russia! The country is overrun with wild savage tribes, and Poland—that little country where the cousins of the Russians settled down—is fighting against Russia also. We shall hear more of that Poland soon, for she became a terrible enemy to Russia. And Russia is divided against herself. And far off over the mountains a fierce band is making its way towards Russia, and coming daily closer. Worse troubles than ever are coming. What will happen to her?

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TARTARS.

FAR, far away in the middle of Asia there lived a tribe of strange people. They had brown faces and small eyes very wide apart. Their beards were thin and their shoulders broad and their hair was black. They had flocks of cows and sheep, and wandered about from place to place.

They had no towns or walled villages, no books and no writing. They had no worship and no laws. Their little children learned to shoot birds and rats with their arrows, and to ride and break-in horses. These people ate raw flesh, and the strongest got the fattest and largest pieces. What have they to do with Russia? Read on and see.

About 1150 one of the people who had been fed on the largest and fattest pieces collected together tribes and tribes into one large force. For he said that as there was one God in heaven, so there ought to be one ruler on earth, and that ruler he himself, Genghis Khan, meant to be.



So he led them on westward. They went in creaking wooden chariots, with camels and buffaloes and horses, and they howled their terrible war-cry. They went on taking town after town through many years. But at last on the horizon before them lay the flat dull surface of the Caspian Sea. And still they went on. . . . That is their side of the story, or rather their Asian side of it. Now for Russia. Russia was in the same miserable state, when one day a messenger came from the Polovtsi to the Russian prince who lived near. This messenger said, "A strange, fierce tribe, called the Tartars, have attacked and taken our city. To-morrow they will take yours also. Come and help us."

At that the princes near took fright for their own sakes. The Tartars sent to say, "Be at peace with us. We have only a quarrel with our relations the Polovtsi." But the princes were foolish, and killed the Tartar messengers, and rushed on to battle to the Sea of Azof. There they met the Tartars. But their battle order was bad, and the Polovtsi ran away. So the rest of the army was cut to pieces and massacred just before the Prince of Kief and others came to help them.

Then the Tartars offered to make peace with the Prince of Kief if he would pay tribute. He agreed, but they broke their word, and killed his men, and stifled him and his son by pressing planks upon



them. In the evening they held their festival over the dead bodies.

All the Russians were in terror and trembling. But suddenly the Tartars changed their minds, turned round, and went back to Asia.

At first the Russians could hardly believe their good fortune, and wondered and thought about the Tartars for a long time. They said they were a strange, unknown people, who had come upon them for their sins, and that only God and very wise men knew who they were. But time passed on, year after year rolled by, and most of the people forgot all about the Tartars. The more thoughtful believed that they saw in the famines and plagues and the eclipses of the sun signs of a great misfortune to come upon Russia.

Thirteen years had passed by when the Russians one morning were struck sick at heart. For they heard that the wild tribes of the east had taken refuge in the country of the Bulgarians because the Tartars had come back.

On they came, more terrible than ever. They took the great city of the Bulgarians, burned the houses, and killed the people. Then seven of the princes of Russia advanced with an army to meet them. The Tartars sent to them to say, "Give us the tenth of your goods and we will leave you in peace." But the princes answered boldly, "You

may have the whole—when we are dead.” And, alas for Russia! that soon was the case, and they lay stark and bloody on the field of battle while the Tartar host went on.

They burned Moscow to the ground, sacked Vladimir and the cities round. As they went they left a terrible black desert behind them, with blackened houses and huts, and masses of ruins. Nearer and nearer to the great Novgorod they came, and the Russian heads fell like grass beneath the scythe; but at the edge of the Novgorod dominions they paused and turned. The next year they came southwards till they reached Kief, fallen Kief, but still beautiful, with white walls and painted towers and golden domes. But Kief even in her fall was brave, foolishly brave, and killed the Tartar envoys.

Then for three days a fierce siege raged round her, with the horrible bellowing of the buffaloes and the cries of the Tartars. At last Kief could hold out no longer. Her temples were razed to the ground, thousands killed and taken captive, the wives of rich boyards, till then adorned with jewels, became slaves of barbarians. Kief was left in ruins, and all Russia, except Novgorod and the north-west, was under the yoke of the Tartars.

Even My Lord Novgorod had to give way at last, as you shall hear. And the whole of Russia was to be under the rule of a wild tribe of Asia.

This was in 1240.

Were the Russians cowards then? Not so. The numbers of the Tartars were very great. Then, too, they had hundreds of horses and the Russians almost none. Again, every Tartar was a soldier, while only the Russian nobles and citizens could fight. Lastly—and this is the Russians' fault, but not their cowardice—they were not one nation, but divided up into many little militias and Cossack bands.

So the Tartars conquered "the house divided against itself." And Bati, the Khan, built the city Sarai on the Volga, and there he lived and ruled.

Novgorod alone held out, by the help of a prince whose name will never be forgotten. Alexander was his name. When the Tartars came back he was only seventeen years old. But he was Prince of Novgorod. Four years after that the Swedes attacked the country, and all the Russians were in great fear. But Alexander went boldly to meet them on the banks of the Neva. As he was going a Christian friar met him, and said, "I have had a wonderful vision. Last night as I was watching the sea just about sunrise I heard a sound coming from it. Then I looked, and behold! a bark came towards me, and in it were two rowers, but their faces were hidden in mist. In the midst of the boat stood two shining forms in purple robes. And I saw they

were the holy brothers Boris and Gleb. And Boris said, 'Brother Gleb, bid the rowers make haste; for we must go to the help of our kinsman Alexander.' At that a great trembling came over me, and when I looked again the bark and the rowers and the holy saints were gone."

When Alexander heard that he rejoiced and went forward hopefully. And he conquered the Swedes in a great battle. After that he was called Alexander Nefsky, that is, Alexander of the Neva.

The Novgorodians were proud of Alexander, but they could not brook obeying him. Twice they forced him to leave the city, but twice had to call him back again. Many and great were the victories he won. Bati himself at Sarai heard of his fame and sent for him. Then he sent him to the depths of Asia, where lived the Great Khan himself. That was a journey of many months for Alexander. At last he reached the palace of the Great Khan. There he was led between two fires, lest, being a Christian, he should pollute the house. And he saw the Great Khan and his wife on the throne. Round him were lords and great men who emptied golden cups of drink while music played. Alexander was forced to bow down many times on his face to the ground. The Great Khan was pleased with him and made him Grand Prince, and sent him home again.

A few years after this Bati died. The Khan who



followed him laid a tax on every man in Russia, and sent his men to count them. My Lord Novgorod would not bear that, for never as yet had the Tartars entered the town.

Alexander knew what the Novgorodians would think about it. He tried hard to make the Khan alter his mind, but it was of no use. Then Alexander went himself with the Tartars to Novgorod, hoping that at sight of him Novgorod would yield. But Novgorod would not yield. The gates were locked, and the Tartars had to go back again. Alexander tried afresh to persuade the Khan to change his mind.

But it was of no use. Next year with a bleeding heart Alexander brought the Tartar officers back again. That time the chief citizens were persuaded by his reasons, and gave leave for the Tartars to enter the town.

But at the sight of them the common people grew full of rage, and rang the great bell. The assembly flocked together, and they cried aloud, "We will die gloriously for our city; we will not be numbered and taxed by accursed feeders on raw flesh." Then Alexander, to terrify them, left the city again; and when they saw he was gone, they grew afraid, and said to each other, "Who will lead us when Alexander leaves us?" At last they agreed sadly to let the Tartars come in. They sat in their

houses silent and offering no resistance to the Tartars, who went round numbering and taxing them. But they felt bitter at heart that My Lord Novgorod the Great had fallen, and that Russia was now at last all under the Tartar yoke.

Soon after the Tartars sent foreign merchants to collect the taxes for them, and they asked more than was due. Then the sore-hearted people rose up against them, forgetting to be wise, and killed them. Alexander was terrified as to the vengeance the Tartars would take, and he set off to Sarai to beg mercy for the people from the Khan. On his way back he fell ill and died.

When the news of his death reached Vladimir service was going on in the cathedral, and at the end Cyril the archbishop turned round and said to the people, "O my children! the sun of Russia is set—is dead." "We are lost!" cried out the people, and burst into tears, for they felt that their last hope was gone.

Four days later Alexander's body was brought back, and though the ground was white with snow, the whole city went out many miles to meet him and bury him with tears. And now the whole land was under the Tartar yoke.

Now think for a while what difference that made to them. What difference would it make to you if some stranger with odd ideas conquered your father

and mother, and made them obey him, and lived in their house? It would make two great differences to you.

Firstly, you would have different rules about lesson-hours and pocket-money, and so on.

Secondly, the conqueror would gradually change your ideas, and make them like his own. If you saw much of him, and wanted to please him, you would gradually get to behave according to his ideas, and then to think as he did. That change would take a long time, but it is the greater of the two.

Now what difference did the Tartars make to Russia in these two ways? The Khans did not take away their princes and put Tartars in their place. They did not take away the Vetchés or the Mîrs, or any of the Russian institutions. These might make what laws they liked.

But they made a great difference in the country all the same. If you had looked over Russia you would have known. Black ruins of villages and towns; fields left uncared for, and overgrown with weeds; gardens and trees broken down and burned; and a few miserable people living miserably. They did not care to dig the fields, for they knew that presently the Tartars would be sweeping over the country, destroying their harvests, burning, killing, carrying away slaves. These slaves were taken away to slave-markets chained in long rows by the

neck. They were branded, and given hard labour by day, and slept in dark cells by night.

Besides this, there was a heavy tax on each man. You know how the people of Novgorod had to give in to that tax.

Then their princes were not altogether free. They were forced to visit the Horde at Sarai, and there to be made princes. Often, like Alexander, they were sent on to the Great Khan in Asia. They were forced also to bring a certain number of men to fight for the Khan when he wanted them. They were treated fairly, and given their share of gain; yet that did not make up to them for the constant leaving of home, and the fighting against their fellow-countrymen.

Besides this, they had to ask for leave when they wanted to make war. And in all things they were obliged to treat the Khan with great respect. They had to meet his messenger on foot, and prostrate themselves while the message was being read.

Now for the second sort of difference. This was far more important. For when the Tartars left the country, all these first differences would disappear at once. But it is a different thing when the thoughts of a people are changed. Then whether the men who made the change go away or remain, the thoughts will work changes themselves.



Suppose that a toy ship has its rudder turned to make it go a certain way. You can put your hand down in front of and hold it so that it cannot move, or you can pull it another way. But the moment you set it free again, it follows the old direction. That is like the first sort of difference.

Suppose, instead of that, you were to alter the direction of the rudder. You might go away and leave it altogether, but the difference you had made would last. You would have changed its course. That is the second sort of difference.

Now the thoughts of a nation are like the rudder of a ship. It is by them that the nation is guided. What difference of the second sort, the lasting sort, did the Tartars make to the Russians ?

Remember this first, that the Tartars made a difference, chiefly to the princes and the boyards, and the rich people. They made little difference to the peasants and the poor. The Tartars called them the black people and the Christians, which showed they cared little about them. But the merchants and the boyards and princes took to dressing like the Tartars, in long caftans and turbans, and carried bows and arrows.

But the greatest difference that we see between the ways of the Russians, before and after the Tartar conquest, is the different idea they have of their prince.



You remember how Igor went to spoil the Drevlians because his boyards asked him to. And how Sviatoslav rowed his own boat, and lived like the common boyards, and how he would not become Christian because he thought they would laugh at him. Again, how Vladimir asked the advice of his boyards about his wife and his religion. All that shows that the prince in those old times was more the head soldier than the king.

But when the Tartars conquered them, the Russians learned how the Tartars treated their king, the Great Khan. They saw how his will was law, and how he could command what he liked, and no one could say him nay.

Besides this, the Khan seemed to think that the Russian princes could rule as he ruled. He sent orders to the prince, and expected that the prince would have no trouble in making the Russians obey him. Then the Russian prince tried hard to make them do so.

So with seeing how great the Khan was, and how great he expected princes to be, the Russians' idea of a prince began to change. Day by day they thought more and more that this was the real idea of a king. This change of mind was helped on by another cause. You remember that the Russians took their Christianity from Constantinople, and that there the Emperor was a sort of head of the Church.

This Emperor was very powerful, and he believed that his power was given him by God. The early Russians once asked him to give them the purple mantle and leggings he wore. But they were told that those things had been brought down by an angel from heaven for the Emperor alone.

So they began to think that this new idea of a king was not only the Khan's idea, but God's idea too. They thought that a king ought to be very powerful, and that there was something holy about his power, and that they ought not to rise against it.

They thought this the more because they listened very attentively to the Church teaching in these sad days. The poor peasants loved it above all. They were miserable at seeing their children taken away, and their houses burned, and at never feeling safe. So they loved to hear the priests tell of a land where there would be meetings and no partings, a land of plenty and of peace, where no Tartars could ever come ; and they grew to love the priests, and to believe all they said. They did this the more because the priests used to feed them and protect them ; for the Tartars favoured the priests, and never touched their monasteries.

So when the priests said that a king was holy, the people believed it. They little thought that this idea would bring misery on them, and grind them and crush them down.

But Russia was not to be under the Tartar yoke for ever. It was like a fresh young shoot over which a prickly old bramble had crept. When the shoot grows it presses upwards, and forces away the bramble.

So in a little quiet town in the middle of Russia there was growing up a clever, determined race of princes. That little village was Moscow. Look for it, for you will hear more and more of it.

The Tartars said that the people of Moscow were very cunning. When they brought Russian slaves into the market to sell, they used to call out, "Fresh-caught slaves, simple and not cunning, and none of them from Muscovy."

Be that as it may, these princes were very clever. The first prince had only Moscow, but he gained two more towns. After that Muscovy the state grew and grew. Presently there was a little piece of country, the shape of an arm, belonging to Moscow.

Then a prince married the Khan's sister, and was made Grand Prince. He fought with a prince near, and had him killed by the Khan. In revenge this prince's son killed him. Russia had not yet learned to be at peace with herself. So her strength had to grow very slowly through many years.

Then came a prince called Kalita. He was the first to give strength to Moscow. He did one thing which was not like a king of old times, but like the

new sort of king. For he took away the great bell of the city Tver, which called together the assembly of the citizens, so that he might make the laws himself.

He was a good prince to his people for all that. He was so kind to the poor that he was called the Almsbag or Kalita. But all his kindness came from the idea that he was to take care of his people; not that they were to take care of themselves, and he was to carry out their ideas. He built many churches, and was kind to the clergy, for he felt that they upheld him. He persuaded the Archbishop of Vladimir to come and live at Moscow. He also built stone walls round Moscow.

It does not seem yet as if the Tartars need fear much from Moscow. But everything has small beginnings. Even the Grand Khan was a baby once.

Twenty years after Kalita's death there came a prince to the throne whose name was Dmitri. He was unlike the princes of this time. For he was not treacherous or cunning, but brave and straightforward.

Gradually he gained the lands round him, and cheered his people with hope. All the time he watched quietly what was going on in the empire of the Tartars at Sarai.

For the Tartars were falling into the old mistake of the Russians, of quarrelling and division among themselves. The consequence was that they invaded



Russia in small bands, and the Khan who owned Sarai, whose name was Mamaï, was not nearly so powerful as the old Khans. Consequently the wise Dmitri felt it was safe to disobey Mamaï many times. When Mamaï grew angry he humbled himself, and then went back to disobedience.

At last one day he fought against Mamaï's chief captain and won the battle. Then the people rejoiced, and took heart, and Dmitri cried out joyfully, "Their day is past, and God is with us." Mamaï was furiously angry, but the first thing he did was to drive out the Russian Prince of Riazan, who was Dmitri's chief enemy, so that Dmitri was still more powerful.

But Mamaï's vengeance was coming. For two long years he was quietly collecting a great army of Turks and all sorts of other tribes. He was helped by a prince whom he had driven out, for this prince arranged secretly that other princes should help Mamaï—a foolish, wicked thing for a Russian to do against his own country.

Dmitri was not idle. He called all the neighbouring princes together, and then sent to Vladimir to ask for the blessing of St. Sergius, the bishop. St. Sergius sent him two monks, and on their cowls he made the sign of the Cross, and said, "Behold a weapon which faileth never." Then Dmitri and his great army set off, 150,000 men,

with their hearts beating high with hope, longing for freedom and thirsting for revenge.

On they went, and once they almost stopped for fear, but took courage again and marched on through the gathering night. As they went, presently they began to hear the sound of a vast host over the plain near the river of the Don. When the morning dawned it was dark and misty, and a heavy fog lay over the forests. Then Dmitri called one of his generals to him, and sent him with a large part of the host to creep quietly up into the forest on one side, and get in front of the Russian host, and there to lie hid. Presently the fog began to clear off and the sun to shine brightly, and then the Russians saw before them the vast Tartar host on their horses, with their lances and poniards. When the Tartars saw them they set spurs to their horses, and came on, howling their war-cry, at a terrible gallop, meaning to crush the Russian army at once. The Russians fought boldly, but soon began to yield, and the Tartars thought the victory was theirs. But suddenly out rushed the Russians who lay in ambush in the forests, and fell on the rear of the Tartar army.

In a moment the Tartars were confused and terrified, and thrown into disorder. The Russians in front of them took heart and pressed on again; the day was won, the Tartars turned and fled. The

great Tartar empire had been beaten by the Russians. Dmitri was found swooning and wounded; but he was revived, and he went back to Moscow gloriously at the head of his army. That was 140 years after the Tartars had taken Kief.

But sad things happened after that glorious victory. The Tartars turned again against Dmitri, and once managed to seize Moscow when he was away, and burned it, and killed the inhabitants. When Dmitri came there, he sat down and wept over the ruins, and said, "Our fathers, who never beat the Tartars, were not so unhappy as we are."

But that was not true, for they had been base and cowardly, and had had no hope of honour and glory. The Russians felt now that at any rate the Tartars could be conquered, though they did not conquer them again for a long time. Dmitri was called Dmitri Donskoi, that is, Dmitri of the Don.

Dmitri did many other good things before he died. He made the dominions of Moscow much larger. He taught the people to use money altogether instead of skins, and he encouraged them to trade with Europe. He brought also the first cannons into the Russian army.

After Dmitri was dead, Moscow went on quietly, gaining more and more, fighting but gaining. Meanwhile the Tartars were growing weaker and weaker because of their quarrels.

About thirty-five years after Dmitri's death a little boy of ten years old came to the throne. Then for a time there were great troubles. For he was conquered by an evil man called Shemyaka. Shemyaka was so unjust, that now when the Russians want to say, "That is a great injustice," they say, "That is Shemyaka justice."

Shemyaka put out the little prince's eyes, but for all that he could not keep Moscow long. When the little prince came to the throne he ruled well and strongly. He was called Vassili the Blind.

Great things had been happening at Constantinople. In 1453 Mahomet II., a great Turkish king, made war against it, and conquered it. The Greek Emperor had to flee, and Russia feared worse oppression yet.

How glad the Russians would have been if they could have known what we know! For we know that all the time there was growing up at Moscow a boy, now only thirteen years old, who was to break the Tartar yoke and make Russia free.

That boy was Ivan the Great.



## CHAPTER VII.

### BREAKING THE YOKE.

Now we come to the man who is first really to shake off the Tartar yoke. That was a great and wonderful deed, and the man who did it was great and wonderful in his way. He was not like Dmitri of the Don, open and straightforward and ready to fight. He was cautious and prudent, and very clever. He knew one great secret—how to *wait*.

When he was born, so the story goes, an old man in Novgorod came to the archbishop and said, "To-day the Grand Prince triumphs; I see this child making himself famous by glorious deeds. But woe to Novgorod! Novgorod will fall at his feet and never rise again."

Ivan grew up full of cleverness and keenness. He was so terrible to look at that when he slept after dinner his boyards sat fearing him, not daring to move. And behind his wonderful dark eyebrows and piercing eyes plans were being formed to bind up broken Russia into one nation again.

And to do this Ivan saw that he must first bring Russia itself under his empire. After that, when he had many soldiers and money at his command, he could do more. He could throw off the Tartar yoke. Little by little, with long patience, he began to gain the Russian kingdoms. When one of his brothers died, Ivan took his kingdom.

Then his eyes turned towards the great city Novgorod. And Ivan's eyes were like the eyes of the god Swifteye. At his glance all enemies crumbled away like dust and ashes.

Some people from Novgorod had ill-treated Moscow people. Ivan sent to ask for redress. But the Possadnik replied that My Lord Novgorod had given him no orders on the subject. Ivan said not one angry word. But he quietly invited all the citizens of Novgorod who were friendly to him to come and see him.

Now, at this time Novgorod was divided into two sets of people. One was headed by a wonderful woman called Marfa, who spoke well and was very brave. This set wished Novgorod to ally itself with the King of Poland, and not to be subject to Ivan. The other set desired to ally Novgorod with Ivan. So while Ivan was giving grand dinners to the archbishop and others off gold plate, Marfa and the Vetché were quarrelling on the bridge. Some shouted, "Long live Ivan!" and others, "The King of

Poland!" At length Marfa and her party conquered, and the men of Novgorod sent to the King of Poland and asked to ally themselves with him.

Then Ivan felt his time was coming. So he sent an army into the land round Novgorod. Then there was much bloodshed and cruel treatment, and Ivan's army always won, until at last the men of Novgorod were forced to give in, and agreed to pay a tax.

So for the time matters were settled. But Ivan had made up his mind to be the only ruler in Novgorod. He waited five long years. All the time he quietly made friends with the lower classes of the city, who were ill-treated by their masters. He invited them to come to a Court he held in Novgorod. Many came, serfs and merchants and all kinds of people. Ivan heard them all so fairly, that when he went back to Moscow many followed him.

Soon after that a lucky chance happened. For one of the clerks, in writing out the document which said how much Novgorod was subject to Ivan, made a mistake. He wrote that Ivan was *sovereign* of Moscow, instead of *lord*. Ivan's quick eye spied out the mistake, and he showed it to the men of Novgorod.

Then the men of Novgorod, fearing lest Ivan should take advantage of the mistake, rose up foolishly, and killed his messengers. Then Ivan

said that the Novgorodians had written that he was sovereign, and were now bold enough to deny it. And when he said that, all the priests were on his side, and so many of the poor people joined him also. Ivan called it a Holy War, and marched up to Novgorod with a large army.

He laid siege to the city, and waited. Marfa and her party inside cried out, "Let us die for liberty. We will never yield!" But presently their provisions gave out, and there was no hope of help. So they begged for peace.

Ivan gave them fair terms. He promised to take no lives, and not to make the Novgorodians fight in his army. But when he marched into the city, he took away the great bell, and said that there should no longer be a Vetché.

So My Lord Novgorod fell at the feet of Ivan the Great and never rose again.

Now you see what sort of a man Ivan the Great was; how he went on patiently and cleverly working and waiting. He was not a good man or a religious one, but he did great things for Russia.

Then he gave his mind to carrying out the great aim of his life. He determined to throw off the Tartar yoke, and make Russia free. But he did not fight the Tartars, like Dmitri of the Don, openly and fiercely by bloody battles. No; he managed to drive away the Tartars without striking a single



blow, or losing one single soldier. That sounds like magic. Now hear how it happened.

The Tartars, as I said before, had quarrelled among themselves. They had split up into three states. The Khans of these states lived, one at Kazan, another in the Crimea, the third at Sarai. This last was the ruler of Russia.

Ivan had watched the Tartars carefully for many years. He had seen how they were growing weaker through their divisions. Now, ten years after he began to reign, he had married Sophia, a Greek princess. Sophia was so proud that she could not bear to think that she was subject to the Tartars, and she kept exclaiming, "How long am I to be a slave to these Mongols?" That made Ivan's purpose still more firm. But he would not be in haste, and it was five years after he married before he even made friends with the Khan of the Crimea. That Khan was a very useful friend to him.

But at last, having laid all his plans, he quietly refused to pay tribute to the Khan of Sarai any longer. Then he marched to meet the Khan's troops on the bank of the river Oka, near Moscow. But while he waited there, he began to feel a doubt as to whether it would be wise to fight. So he went back to Moscow to think about it. When he reached Moscow, his mother and his boyards were all angry with him, and thought him a coward. "Ought

a Christian to fear death?" said the archbishop. Ivan said nothing, but was pleased, for he only wanted to make sure that Moscow would stand by him.

Now he was sure of that, so he went back to his army. There they remained on one side of the river while the Tartars were on the other. Sometimes they shot arrows across, or shouted out rude remarks, but neither side tried to fight. There they stood and waited for a week. At the end of the week the Khan said that he would forgive Ivan, if Ivan would come and kiss his stirrup. But Ivan answered politely that he had rather not. So they went on waiting.

Then the people of Moscow thought that Ivan was afraid. And the archbishop sent a stern letter to Ivan, saying, "Will you deliver Russia to sword and flame? The blood of your people will cry out upon you! Where will you flee from that accusation? Even from the stars God will hurl you down. Cast away fear." Ivan read the letter, and sent a courteous message to the archbishop, and said, "Your letter fills my heart with joy and courage." Then he waited a fortnight longer.

At the end of the fortnight bitter frosts came on. Then Ivan bade his army retreat. The soldiers were much surprised when they heard this order. They said to one another, "Ivan must be afraid. And

if Ivan is afraid, who can be bold?" So, instead of marching away, they ran away.

When the Khan saw them going away, he thought it was a clever trick to make him follow them and then catch him in a trap. So to make himself safe he began to march away. Then his army thought he was frightened, and they too began to feel fear. So they marched faster and faster, till they were running away as hard as they could. They ran and ran, and never stopped till they reached the middle of Asia. And they never came back again. That was in 1480, and that was the end of the Tartar rule.

After that Ivan grew very bold. He had driven away the Tartars of Sarai by sitting and looking at them for three weeks. So he thought he would try what sending an army against the Khan of Kazan would do. It did quite as much as he hoped. For the army came marching back after a few weeks with the Khan of Kazan as their prisoner.

But Ivan was far too wise to put a Russian prince in Kazan. For he knew that would make the Tartars rebel. So he offered the kingdom to the nephew of the Khan of the Crimea. That pleased the Khan of the Crimea, and made the Kazanese contented, and the kingdom was still in Ivan's power.

The friends of the old Khan of Kazan asked Ivan to give him his liberty. Ivan refused, but he refused so politely, and sent them such presents of

clothes and falcons and fishes' teeth, that they could not be angry.

Then Ivan turned to another enemy. This was Poland. Ivan longed to win Poland for himself. But he would never make war without a show of reason. Ivan's daughter had married the King of Poland. But Ivan had made her promise that she would remain a Greek Christian. And the King of Poland had promised not to convert her to his religion—Romish Christianity.

But presently Ivan said that his daughter was being forced to be a Roman Catholic. So he made war on Poland. There were several fierce battles, but Ivan always won. At last he made peace for six years on condition that a large piece of Poland was given to him.

He only lived two years longer. He had gained an enormous amount of country for Russia. Besides the land of the Tartars, and part of Poland, he had sent people into Finland and across the Ural Mountains. And they had conquered that land of snow and ice and stunted trees.

Ivan had made great friends with Venice and Germany and Greece. Better than this, he had sent for all sorts of European workmen to teach the Russians. You remember that his wife was a Greek princess. Because of this many Greeks had come into Russia, artists and statesmen and learned



men. They had brought with them wonderful old Greek manuscripts which made the first Russian library.

Ivan was always very courteous and polite to his guests. A Venetian ambassador once said, "When I was speaking to the prince, I respectfully stepped back, but the Grand Prince always drew near and gave particular attention to my remarks."

Ivan was rather a hard master to the people of Russia, although he had freed them from the Tartars. His punishments were cruel, torture and whipping with a whip of leather, the knout, which he invented. He laid heavy taxes on the poorer people, and made them pay a fourth of all they had—of their sheep and fowls and eggs, and all their goods. He was the first sovereign of Russia who burned and hung heretics.

So when he died the people said of him, "He has delivered our land from the yoke of the Tartars." And for that they were grateful, for it was a great deliverance. Yet Ivan was not the greatest sovereign of Russia, and in one way he had done her harm. For he had taken away her right to rule herself, as he had taken away the bell of Novgorod. Do you remember the dead and the living water? Ivan was like the dead water. He healed Russia's wounds, and made her whole once more. But he did not give her spirit and life; he made her ready for

these to come. And they came in the days of the great Czar Peter.

When Ivan was dead, Vassili, his son, reigned. He went on with his father's work much in his father's way. Only he was not so cautious and so ready to wait. He began war more roughly than Ivan.

One day he sent for the magistrates of Pskof and put them all in prison. Then he went up to Pskof with a large army, and laid siege to it. Poor little My Lord Pskof! It was of no use for it to try to hold out. Very sorrowfully the men of Pskof were forced to yield. It was with tears and sobs that they told Vassili they would submit to him.

Then Vassili took away their great bell, and Pskof's freedom was gone. Pskof mourned, and said, "An eagle, with claws like a lion, has swooped down on me. He has taken my three cedars,—my riches, my beauty, my children."

Vassili conquered many of the provinces round. But for all his strength the Tartars made a great invasion into the land. They burned down the houses and the fields, and took away the people for slaves.

At last, after hard struggles, Vassili drove them away. But where Ivan the Great won by cleverness and without a blow, Vassili won by strength and a bloody fight.

He made friends with Europe, as his father had

done. At home he was even more of a tyrant than his father had been. Ivan always was careful to ask his boyards for their advice, and he thanked them much for it. After that he acted as he had meant to act before. But if a boyard ventured to suggest anything to Vassili, Vassili bellowed out, "Hold your tongue, you lout!" Once when a boyard said that Vassili decided all questions shut up in his bedroom, Vassili ordered that his head should be taken off. So his boyards hated and feared him.

Vassili kept great state. His throne was guarded by young nobles in long caftans of white satin. On their heads were caps of white fur, and in their hands silver hatchets. These were great expenses for poor Russia.

Vassili reigned twenty-eight years. He died without being mourned, though the people felt that he had followed out his father's plans.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FIRST CZAR.

SOMETIMES I fear you lose your temper. You want to be head in a particular game, or you want for yourself what the others also want. How does the game ever go on peaceably? You go away most likely from the others to another room by yourself; and so they can continue their game happily without you.

That was like old Russia. The boyards of each prince quarrelled for the headship or for estates. And if one could not get what he wanted, and grew angry, he went away to another prince, and so the kingdom he left was at peace. That prevented many fierce wars and bloodshed.

But suppose that when you lost your temper you had no other room to go to, and could not get away from the people you quarrelled with. Then the quarrel would very likely grow worse, till the room was full of quarrelling and angry words.

That was like Russia when Ivan the Great had



made it all one kingdom. Then the vexed, angry boyards had no other Russian prince to turn to. There were only enemies of Russia to go to, and that of course they would not do. For this reason there was much trouble through the reigns that followed Ivan's. The troubles with the Tartars were bad enough; and when troubles and quarrels at home had to be settled also, the king's task was hard. It was like driving a coach with horses that hated each other so much that they kept jibbing away from each other. They had to be held in, and the coach to be driven at the same time.

The people of Russia, when they heard that Vassili was dead, shook their heads, and said, "We shall have trouble now." For Vassili's sons were two quite little boys of two and three years old. The name of the eldest was Ivan, like his grandfather.

For a time peace was kept. For the mother of the two little princes was a clever and a brave woman. Her name was Helen, and she was almost as beautiful as her namesake, and very frank and friendly in her manners. For all that she was stern and determined. She kept down the boyards with a high hand; and she did not fear to imprison some in dark cells, or punish with the knout and torture. She built strong ramparts round part of the city of Moscow to defend it against the Tartars. But

when she died trouble and sorrow came upon Russia. For Ivan was only eight years old. And the selfish, ambitious boyards rose up and cried, "Now is our time, while the prince is young." So they wrested the power one from another, and they used it evilly and cruelly, till the whole country hated the name of boyard, and longed even for a stern Czar.

Ivan began to understand their government, and he knew how they treated him. For he saw the boyards plunder the palace of its rich furniture and treasures. One even flung himself on the state bed with his boots in the embroidered arm-chair in brutal sport. Ivan, with his clever high forehead and dark eyes, watched all. None dared to speak to him kindly, for fear the other boyards might grow jealous.

So Ivan was left neglected. No one taught him; but he loved studying and read alone. He read the Bible and the lives of the saints, and the stories of the old kings. Then he saw how great kings had been in days gone by. He saw, too, when foreign envoys came to his court, that he was set in a throne, and all the cruel boyards bowed before him. Then he said in his heart, "I will have real power some day, and break the boyards' rule."

At last the day came. It was at Christmas, in the year 1543, and there had been grand feasts and

rejoicing. Suddenly Ivan sent to his boyards, and called them all to his great hall of justice. There they saw this boy of thirteen on his throne, and they wondered what he meant by his summons.

Ivan rose up, and in a fierce voice he said, "You govern badly and cruelly. You torment the people, and you wander from town to town, taking money and doing cruel acts. There are many guilty ones among you. This time I will only punish one for an example." Then he turned to his guards and said, "Seize the noble Andrew Chouiski."

The guards obeyed, and seized the boyard as he stood dumb with horror. Then Ivan bade them bring the hungry, fierce-mouthed hounds out of their kennels, and let them loose upon him. And there, in the midst of the hall, they tore Andrew limb from limb.

Ivan did not rest there. He sent many of his nobles into exile. Round him he collected those whom he wished to help him.

Four years later he was crowned publicly by the archbishop. But he was no more crowned Prince, but he was crowned Czar.

Now *Czar* was a far greater title than *Prince*. In the Russian Bible Pharaoh was called the Czar, and the King of Babylon was called the Czar, and David. Also the Russians called the Emperors of Rome and Constantinople Czars.

At this time so many princes and grand princes were subject to the Prince of Moscow that he needed another title to show his greatness. So Ivan chose the greatest title he knew, and was crowned Czar.

This meant more than the name only. For the name of Czar was a holy name almost to the Russian people. You remember how holy they thought the Czar of Constantinople. Now, as I said before, they were beginning to feel the same to their Czar—that it was wrong to rebel, and that he was their great master in everything, and his will was law. Presently there grew to be many sayings about the Czar, as if he was the mightiest man of the earth: “Everything I have belongs to the Czar;” “God and the Czar will it: it must be done.”

So the Czar Ivan reigned. But his rule was careless and cruel. You must remember that he was untaught and ignorant. None had told him to be merciful and just. So he was violent and idle and gross. He loved to inflict suffering. He would sprinkle boiling water upon his dogs, and laugh to hear them howl and yelp; or he would punish peasants cruelly and needlessly.

But soon a change came. A terrible fire broke out at Moscow. It flamed from house to house, and passed on so quickly that seventeen hundred people were burned to death. Ivan fled to a little village



near, and in terror he watched the hungry flames light up one part of the city after another.

Then the boyards whom Ivan had not favoured cried out against those who had helped him to rule. "Ivan's friends have caused this fire by their witchcrafts," they said. "They have taken human hearts and plunged them in water, and with the water they have sprinkled the houses; hence the fire and all our miseries."

And the foolish, ignorant people, when they heard this, believed it, and grew full of wrath and madness. They rushed to the palace, and there, in the chapel, they stabbed a noble. Then they marched on to the village where Ivan was, and it was with great trouble that they were repulsed, and Ivan's life was saved.

Ivan heard their angry shouts, and his heart was full of terror. For the fear of death came upon him, and he felt that he was guilty before God, and that he could not cry to God for mercy when he had shown none to men. Then, with bitter tears, and in great terror, he vowed that from that time he would live a good life.

Then he chose two men to help him to govern. One was a priest, Silvester, and the other a noble, Adachef. They were clever men, apt to govern, clear of sight and wise of mind. Under their rule the land had rest for two years.

And Ivan married happily. His wife was Anastasia, of the family of Romanov. From her people the kings of Russia were to spring. And she was pure and mild and gentle beyond most women. Ivan loved her dearly. And she taught him what none had ever taught him yet,—lessons of mercy and purity and justice.

And the day was coming when Ivan and the Russians should win themselves glory by a mighty siege. That siege is sung of still in Russian songs.

Now the men of the great Tartar city, Kazan, on the banks of the Volga, had not yet chosen their king. For they had to pay obedience either to the Czar of Russia or the Khan of the Crimea. At last, after many disputes and much talking, they determined to be the subjects of the Czar Ivan. So Ivan sent them a boyard to take their oaths and rule them.

But there were men in Kazan who hated Ivan, and desired to belong to the Tartars. These told the ignorant people that the Russians were marching against them to slay them. Then the people in terror shut the gates of the city and barred out the men of Moscow.

Then Ivan swore a great oath, "I will make Kazan yield." So he sent his foot-soldiers with their rude cannons down the river Volga in their boats, while the cavalry followed along the banks.

Then the Russians sat down before the city. The soldiers built their little huts of branches, and covered them with straw and heather. And the horsemen with their high saddles and rich trappings fought boldly with the men sent out from Kazan, and the foot-soldiers shot at them from the "city that walks,"—long wooden walls that they set up to protect themselves.

Day after day the Czar offered terms of peace to the men of Kazan, and day after day they answered, "We will make no peace." Then to terrify them Ivan hung up his prisoners on high gibbets before the city. But the men of Kazan shot arrows at them, crying out, "It is better they should die by the hands of their countrymen than by the unclean hands of Christians."

But the Russians began to suffer terribly. For great storms destroyed their ships, which held the food and the shot, so that the men went hungry, and the cannons could not be used. But Ivan would not yield.

Then the sorcerers of Kazan took their stand on the walls with robes girt up, and made strange, weird signs, and called down curses on the Russians. And long floods of rain came on the Russian camp as if in answer to their spells,—such floods that the soldiers' huts were swept away, and the men fell ill and died. But Ivan sent for a holy Cross from

Moscow, and then, so said the Russians, the rains stopped, and the sorcerers' wiles were of no avail.

Ivan used other means also. He sent for a German engineer, who taught the Russians to dig under the walls of Kazan to make their foundations weak. And at length an hour came when Ivan was praying in the church, and the deacon read, "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd." And at that moment there was a great crash in the city of Kazan. For the high walls of wood and brick tottered and fell.

Then with the cry of "God with us!" in marched the Russian army, each man straight before him into the city. Then there was work for their long swords. And the streets flowed with blood, and rang with cries and screams, till the slaughter was so great that Ivan himself was moved with pity. And he said weeping, "They are not Christians, but at least they are men." So great was the slaughter that the Tartars were mown down by hundreds. And they sing songs still of the horror to this day.

"There  
The power of Kazan with its fourfold gates,  
From the prison windows our maidens fair  
Talk of us still through the iron grates.

Ah! the black day hath come down on Kazan,  
Ah! was ever a grief like this?"

But the Russians gloried. For it was the first time



that they had avenged themselves on the Tartars, and the first time that the Christians had shown themselves mighty conquerors of the Mohammedans.

So the Russians took possession of the city, and in the place of the mosques they built Christian churches. And the glory of Ivan and his victory was spread throughout the Russian land. That was in the year before Queen Mary of England came to the throne.

After that there were many wars, and the Russians won themselves glory. For they conquered the great Tartar kingdom of Astrakhan, so that everywhere the Tartars bowed their proud heads before the men who had been their slaves.

Then, like the great sovereigns after him, Ivan wished to open a window into Europe. And for that he had fierce wars. He fought with Poland and Sweden, and with the sword-bearing knights, who wore white mantles and red crosses, and carried European weapons finely wrought. Yet though Ivan could not subdue them utterly, he won glory for Russia.

But these bright times were not to last. For Ivan's strength was soon to be spent on a far more weary war at home. He was growing jealous of Adachef and Silvester, his clever councillors. And one day an evil voice said to him, "If you wish to be a great emperor, do not rule by the help of men who are cleverer than you."

So he grew more and more suspicious of them. And one day he fell ill, and then those around him who had obeyed for fear, and not for love or faith, showed themselves as they were. They quarrelled among themselves as to the new emperor, and they would not swear allegiance to Ivan's son; and Ivan said that Adachef and Silvester were among them.

Only a few boyards gathered round Ivan's bed, while he lay sick, and to them he said slowly and painfully—

“When God shall have worked His will on me, do not, I pray you, forget the oath that you have sworn to my son and me; fly with him to some strange land, wherever God will lead you.”

Then he turned to the brothers of his wife and said, “Why are you afraid? Do you think that the boyards will spare you? You will die the first; die then rather, since you must die, for my wife and son.”

But Ivan did not die. Slowly and very hardly he struggled back to life. And his first deed was to banish Silvester and Adachef. But those days were written in fire on his heart, and from that time he had no more faith nor trust in the boyards round him, and he ruled them with a rod of iron, so that men called him Ivan the Terrible.

And though for a time none were put to death, the court of Ivan was teeming with boyards who

hated his rule and could not abide his service. And, as I said, they had no other Russian prince to flee to. At length a Russian boyard played traitor to his country sooner than remain a servant to Ivan. His name was Kourbski; he fled to the Poles, and from there sent a messenger with a letter to the Czar.

Ivan was told of it in his palace. And he came out, with his eyes full of fire, and his terrible iron staff with its sharp point in his hand, and he met the messenger on the Red Staircase. Then Ivan bade him read the letter, and as he spoke he raised his staff and with it nailed the man's foot to the staircase as he stood.

Thus ran the letter: "Czar once glorified by God, who now hast been unveiled to our eyes with a soiled and leprous soul like the soul of a heathen, I have a few words to say to thee. Why hast thou put to death the valiant warriors given thee by God? Why hast thou reddened the porch of thy temple with the blood of the martyrs? Dost thou deem thyself immortal, O Czar? Canst thou escape the righteous Judge, Jesus our God?"

So wrote Kourbski, and as Ivan heard it his heart grew fierce and hard. All night in the palace were heard stealthy footsteps, and now and then a cry. And before many nights were over Ivan had nothing to fear from the friends of Kourbski, for they lay dead.

Yet Ivan felt that he could no longer rule as he was with traitors round him. So with his friends and servants and treasures he left Moscow, and went to a quiet country village. Then he wrote to the Archbishop of Moscow, and to him he said, "The nobles and the clergy are unfaithful to me, I cannot trust them, and I will rule Russia no longer." But to the common people he wrote, "I blame you in nothing."

Then there was confusion and great trouble in Moscow. For the people feared that the boyards would come into power instead of Ivan. For Ivan had governed them justly, and more mildly than the kings before him, and they loved him for his justice and for the glory he had won in war for Russia. And the boyards and clergy feared the people, and dared not try to rule over them in Ivan's stead.

So at length all agreed to ask Ivan to come back and rule again. And they went to him, humbly beseeching him. Then Ivan came back at their request. But he changed the government; he put the whole country under the rule of the boyards, except a part which he governed alone. Only he kept this right, that he himself might punish traitors as he willed.

Then Ivan the Terrible began his reign of terror. The vexed boyards were plotting and making attempts



to slay secretly by night; and Ivan fought them with the weapons of torture and the knout, and death painful and full of horror. Hardly a day passed that many did not suffer death; in one day fifteen hundred men of Novgorod were slain, and before Ivan died he dared to ask the prayers of the Church for the souls of nearly four thousand victims.

He could no longer trust his subjects. The last words he said to his sons were, "Be ever on the watch against your subjects." That is a sad government where the nobles and the king watch each other like treacherous, deadly foes.

Yet Ivan did not rule the Russian nation hardly. To them he was merciful and just, and made good laws for them. And he did much for Russia.

It was in his reign that Siberia was first discovered. The Cossack Jermak with a band of men crossed the low wall of the Urals, and terrified the fur-clad Fins by the sound of his guns. He went through the vast plains of snow, conquering east to west; and when he came back he told the Czar that Siberia belonged to Russia.

And for the people of Russia Ivan did much. He was the cleverest man in the whole land. He wrote books, and he was the first to bring in printing. The people thought it was a wicked, magic art.

He too began to make friends for Russia among

the countries of Europe. In his reign the English first came to Russia. Three ships were sent by King Edward VI. to discover what land lay in the northern seas. Two were wrecked, and only one came to land. The captain of that ship was astonished to find that he had reached the land of the Czar. "For," said he, "I have found Russia at the North Pole." After that many Englishmen travelled in Russia, and were surprised to find how great a country it was. One said with astonishment, "The Russians are not wild heathens after all, but Christians, and civilised."

Many European workmen and artists came to Russia in the time of Ivan. You remember the German engineer at the siege of Kazan. By their help Ivan did much to make Moscow beautiful. He finished building a stone wall round part of the city, which was called the Kremlin.

At last his reign drew to an end. He had had seven wives and a son, Dmitri, whom he loved dearly. But in one of his passions he struck this son with his iron staff, and the blow was so hard that his son died. Great and fierce was the sorrow of the Czar.

One day he fell ill. He called in the help of witches and magic herbs, but it was all of no avail. And at length Ivan the Terrible lay dead.

What had he done? He was cruel to his boyards,

but he had done much for Russia. When he died the Russians owned three times the land they had owned before. He had helped to make Russia a mighty country, and paved the way for the great Czar Peter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SLEDGING THROUGH MUSCOVY.

It is very difficult always to know exactly how other people behave and what they do. It took a very clever man many years to observe enough about the habits of worms to write a book about them. So it takes longer still to observe the habits of human beings, as they are more interesting than worms. And it becomes harder and harder the longer ago they lived. However, in spite of all that, I mean to take you a fresh journey across Russia, to observe the ways of the Russians. There was a clever Englishman who took that kind of journey in the days of Ivan the Terrible, and his name was Fletcher. So we must look with his eyes at the Russians.

This time we will travel, not in a balloon, but, as the Russians travel, in sledges. And we will suppose it to be the winter-time, and that we are travelling south to Moscow. The roads, you see, are covered with snow, and full of holes and great ruts





PLAN OF OLD MOSCOW.



and snow-drifts. Look at the ten horses which drag our sledge; they are ready to start. Perhaps it seems a great many horses to drag only three people,—you and me and our driver, but the roads are so bad that we could not do with less.

Here we go, bumping and jumping and shaking over the rough roads, worse than the jolting of any English cart. Now the jolting has stopped for a little, for here you see the snow has frozen over smoothly, like a sheet of glass, and we go flying along. That is delicious, though the wind cuts like a knife.

Look, there is a little village in front of us. See how it is built. It looks like half a long street, with a row of houses on one side only, all joined together, and all of wood; and the houses are only one story high.

Look, there is a woman running out of that house with a live chicken in her hand. What does she want? She wants the driver of our sledge to kill it for her, because she may not kill it herself, as she is only a woman. In Russia they think very little of women at this time. She would tell us that her husband often beats her, and that she obeys him as a slave obeys her master. She does not love him the less for that, for she thinks it is all right. There is a funny old Russian proverb that says, "I love thee like my soul, and I dust thee like my jacket." Ivan's friend Silvester has lately written a book

called "Household Customs," and all he says about wife-beating is, "Do not beat your wife with too thick a stick, or one that has an iron point."

Now we will ask her, in return for killing her chicken, if we may not go into her house and see it. As she goes in front of us you can see she is dressed in a dull grey cloth; her best gown is blue, or red, but she only wears that on holidays. Here we are inside the room. There is very little furniture. Do you see that long shelf running round the room about six feet broad? That is where all the family sleep, unless they are ill, when sometimes they sleep on the stove in the corner. The stove, you see, is square, and built of brick. In the corner stands a curious little picture of the head of the Virgin, that is their icon or sacred picture, and a little lamp burns before it. But I am sorry to say that the picture is so dirty we can hardly see what it is meant for.

Now come out again into the street. Let us stop that man coming along, and ask him how he lives, and what work he does. He is a peasant, and has a master, for whom he works four days in the week, so that he has only two days left to dig his own field. He thinks it hard, and does not love his master, but he is very patient. But he thinks that the great friend of the peasants is the Czar,—for the Czar rules the nobles who rule him.



Ask him what taxes he has to pay. Well, first of all, he has to pay the tax on his fire, and then a tax on his corn, and a tax on the bath-house ; and Russians, you know, cannot do without a bath-house. Sometimes the year is so bad that he cannot pay them, and then dreadful punishments come upon him.

He is taken and brought before the Starost, who is a governor over the owners of a hundred ploughs ; and because he is poor and cannot pay, he is sentenced to have the punishment of a debtor. He is taken to a public place, in the middle of the village or town, and then his caftan is taken off, and he is tied half naked to a post and beaten for three hours with a rod. This goes on every day for two months, and he spends the rest of the day in prison, till at last, if no one pities him and pays his debt, he is sold to be a slave, and his wife and children hired out for servants. If it is thought that he has stolen anything, or broken the law in any way, he is brought up before the same Starost and questioned—and not only questioned, but tortured, to make him confess ; and the torture is whipping with the knout—a whip made of twisted strips of leather—or roasting at a fire, or having splinters run in under his nails. After that sentence is passed on him. Supposing it were the first offence, he would only be beaten more with the knout. But if it were the second

offence he would be sent to the governor of the province, who would sentence him to death. He will tell you that he has often in the village town seen the cart going along to the place of execution, with prisoners seated in it, their hands tied together, and a lighted wax taper stuck between them. Sometimes they are hanged, sometimes beheaded, sometimes put under the ice, and so drowned.

All the peasants, you know, have not masters for whom they work, but all suffer under the same law. Some own their own land.

The peasants are not as a rule very good men, though they are patient. They drink a great deal, and are cruel and brutal to each other. And they do not keep their word, and often tell lies.

But we must get into our sledge and drive on again. In the spring all the great white stretches of snow and the frozen streams are quite gay and bright. Then all the village people come out and hold their festival, and make flower wreaths and dance and sing.

Look at that little crowd of peasants on the road before us. What are they doing? They are waiting, they tell us, to see the Russian army, which is going to cross that road to-day. We will watch too, for it is a sight worth seeing.

Don't you hear that noise of tramping and drums in the distance? Here they come. But they do not

look like a regular army—more like a crowd of soldiers off duty, for they are not marching in line and in step, but just walking along anyhow. The whole army, I must tell you, is divided into four great companies, or legions, and each legion has its standard. The only order the soldiers keep in marching is that they keep near their own standard. When they meet the enemy then they form into bodies of horse and foot, and charge as they are ordered.

Here come some of the common horsemen. They are dressed in the long caftan, as usual. They have high saddles, and carry only a bow under their right arm, and a quiver and sword at the left side. One or two have daggers and javelins. Just think, many of these very men were at the great siege of Kazan. That man there is a captain, as you may tell by his coat of mail and the little brass drum at his saddle-bow. He beats on that when the charge is sounded.

The man with a gorgeous saddle of cloth of gold is the general. His bridle is set with all manner of pearls and precious stones, and the brightness of his shining steel armour makes one's eyes ache. The edging of it is of ermine fur, and he has a helmet his head.

Look at those four horses fastened together with chains and with a large board laid on their backs. On the board, as you see, lies a huge drum which it takes eight men to beat properly. Round the big





PETER AND THE STRELTZI.



and worn-out they look. For they have been forced to come to war, and to leave their children behind with no one to look after them. And they will bring no money back to them when they go home, for they are never paid, and there are no rewards for them, however bravely they fight. And they suffer terribly often from cold and hunger. And so they think war a cruel, dreadful thing, and think nothing of the glory they gain for Russia. They die patiently, dumb and stolid, and never ask for mercy.

Before they are quite gone, I want you to notice two different bodies of men. Do you see those swarthy, dark-skinned men, with small eyes set far apart? These are a Turkish tribe which Ivan has conquered. He pays them to fight for him; he was the first to do that. The second is that troop of Russians marching rather better than the rest of the army. They are called the *Streltsi*, and are what we should call the standing army. That is, they are soldiers all the year round; they are not peasants called up when they are wanted. Ivan has just formed them into a regiment, and they mostly live at Moscow near the palace. Do not forget them.

So the whole army passes by. It is an army that has done glorious deeds. But it is a sad sight too.

Now we will come on quickly. Wrap yourself up well in the furs, and mind your nose particularly. Fletcher gives a pitiful account of how some people

looked, who did not wrap themselves up carefully, when they got to Moscow. "Many travellers," he says, "are brought into the townes sitting dead and stiffe in their sledges. Many lose their noses, the tippes of their eares, and the balles of their cheekes." Of course you know why he spells so oddly ; it is because all this is so long ago, in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

Here we fly quickly through another village, but it is all desolate, with weeds growing at the door-steps and choking up the windows and silent houses, like a city of the dead. Why is that ? There was great illness in this village and no doctors, and many died, and then the owner of the property is a hard man, and put many others to death. And in the cold winter nights hungry howling wolves and bears came out of the woods and ate others. And the rest fled from their village for terror. So it is with many villages.

Those bears are a dreadful trouble, even in the summer, when the days are hot and bright and long. The women know that who go to gather strawberries. For Bruin is very fond of lying in the places where strawberries grow, and sometimes he meets the women there, and then——.

Now you must not think that Russia is always cold and desolate and dreary. In the spring, when the white robe of snow has melted away, and the earth

looks out again, then there are such bright colours on the country, and the woods of fir and birch are so fresh and sweet-smelling, and the pastures and fields so green and well-grown, as if they had shot up in the night—there are so many flowers, and such noise of birds, especially of nightingales, who seem to sing more sweetly here than in any other country, that you will not easily find a more pleasant place. At least that is what Fletcher said, and he was by no means over-fond of Russia, and had been there a great deal.

But see, we are no longer in wild white stretches of wood and plain. We can see hedges rising up above the snow marking out the fields. And a little way in front of us is the most beautiful sight: high rising hills, and on them bright white stone houses and walls and gleaming roofs, all blue and green and red, and glittering domes of all colours with shining gold stars on them. What is that? That is Moscow, the great city of seven hills, the holy city Moscow.

First, we shall pass through a ring of white-walled convents. For Moscow is like an almond with its kernel split in two.

First, we are going through the skin of the almond. The very outside part of it is this ring of white-walled convents. And the rest of the thickness of the skin is woods and gardens and wide marshy roads. On each side of the streets stand



wooden houses of the peasants and the Streltsi, and here and there larger houses of the noblemen. Moscow was burned down so often that the house-builders set up a good trade, and kept ready-made houses, so that you could go and choose your house at their shop.

At last we come to the two parts of the kernel. One is the Kremlin—that is, an enclosure in which stand the Czar's palaces, and many great churches and monasteries; the other is an enclosure in which stand the noblemen's houses, and other churches, and the shops. We will drive up between the two into that great wide space. That is called the Red Place. Sad, dark things happen there sometimes. Look at that marvellous church to your left. Ivan built that in memory of the taking of Kazan. It has domes and turrets of all forms and colours, some lozenge-shaped, some like scales of fish. It looks like a great magic dragon lying asleep.

Now in through the gate in the wooden wall, into the enclosure of the noblemen's houses and the shops, which they call the Kitaigorod. Look at that man carrying little gilt images of saints; let us ask him whether he will not sell us some of them. But he does not answer; he is looking round uneasily. Why does he not spread them out to show us properly?

Ah! that is because he is afraid that there may be some great noble walking about near, and that



this noble may take it into his head to seize upon his images, and take them off without paying for them; and if he does that, the poor owner can do nothing, for the thief is a nobleman, and he is only a peasant.

Does that sound fair and just to you? and do you think that the Russians are likely to trade among themselves, and with other people? No, indeed; and there are many unfair doings besides these. Sometimes the Czar Ivan obliges the people to buy corn from him at his own price, and to buy from no one else till the Czar's storehouses are empty. Sometimes he sends his officers to buy furs or fish very cheaply from the northern men, and then sells them again at a high price. When there is a fair in the town, the merchants who bring goods to sell have to show them all to the Czar's officers; and if these think the Czar would like any of them they take them away and only pay what they wish. Trade is not good in Russia, and no wonder.

Look at that number of horses and sledges and carriages standing before the door of that large house. The horses are pawing the ground, and out-riders on their backs are cracking long whips; and all round are standing numbers of barefooted slaves, not Russians, but dark-skinned Turks. That nobleman is going out hunting, and so we will go in and look at his house while he is out. There he goes

with a long beard and flowing dress. Now come in and upstairs; look at the wall as you pass; it is of wood, but the logs are cunningly notched together, and moss is stuffed in between to keep out the air.

Now come in. The door is low and large, and we find ourselves in a long low vestibule. This door leads to the men's part; another door further on leads to the women's part. For the women are kept very carefully, and not allowed to go out, except in a litter with curtains drawn all round. For it is thought wrong that any man, except their husbands and relations, should see their face. When they are ill, and the doctor comes, there are holes made in the curtains for their hands and tongues, but he may not see their faces. And yet if they die, the doctor is often put to death. There are not many doctors in Russia.

There is very little furniture in the rooms. The stoves are covered with painted tiles, and there is tapestry in the dining-hall. Would you like to hear how that nobleman spends his days?

He plays cards a good deal and chess, when he is not hunting, or he goes to look at a bear-fight. Fletcher tells us how horrid that looks, and how the bear comes straddling across, and how tight he can squeeze the man who fights him.

Then, too, this nobleman keeps jesters, who amuse him with their jokes, or sing him old songs about

Alexander Nefsky and Ivan, and all the old heroes. He does not care at all for books, and in the evening he eats an enormous supper with sometimes as many as seventy dishes, and drinks himself drunk.

His wife and daughters live even duller lives. They sew a good deal, and often go to church. Also they spend many hours in dressing themselves in their rich embroidered dresses, with hanging sleeves and huge gold buttons, and in doing up their hair with soft silk handkerchiefs and rich jewelled caps, fur-edged, and in putting in their earrings and bracelets. Also they paint their faces white and red, which they think looks lovely, and they wish very much to get as fat as possible.

Of course all are not like this. Some are more sensible, and cleverer. But we must not stay longer. Come out, and come across to the Kremlin. Look, all the people have their best dresses on. Let us ask them why. It is because the English ambassadors are coming to see Ivan the Czar to-day, and so all the people are ordered to dress in their best.

Now come along the unpaved streets, deep in snow. Here is the wall of the Kremlin. It is in the shape of a triangle pointing northwards, and along the south side is the little river Moskowa, frozen hard now. Look, how many towers in the walls,—eighteen of them.

Take off your hat as we pass under the gate, for



it is the gate of the Saviour, and is a sacred gate, and none may pass under it covered. Here we are inside. Look at that great church with its wonderful painted domes; that is where the Czars are crowned. Inside you might see tawny gold pillars, and wonderful pictures; but the windows are only loopholes, too small to see through. And there are the palaces. The Gold Palace and the Palace of Facets, and many others.

But listen to the noise of feet behind us. It is the English ambassadors coming to the Palace of Facets. Let us follow them, and slip in too, and we shall catch a glimpse of Ivan the Terrible.

Here we pass into the great hall. Look first at the tapestry round the walls, rich tapestry, and the golden bright dishes; for if you look at Ivan first, you will never take your eyes off him. Look at his chair on the dais; that is called the throne of Solomon, and it is rich with gold. All round it stand young nobles, richly dressed. And supporting it there are clockwork lions which roar. You can hear them now.

Now look at the Czar himself, with his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand. Look at his face, his bright, piercing eyes, and his terrible stern mouth and dark eyebrows. That is a face which you can never forget.

Now come away, for we cannot wait to hear the



speaking. For it would take me a whole page to write down even the proper name and title of Ivan the Terrible, and he will have it all, every jot, or know the reason why. Come home now, back to the nineteenth century, but do not forget our look at Muscovy.

## CHAPTER X.

### SERFDOM AND PRETENDERS.

Now Ivan the Terrible had two sons. Feodor was the elder, Dmitri the younger. Feodor's name sounds soft and sweet, and not very strong. This Feodor was like his name.

But Feodor had a brother-in-law named Boris Godounov. And Boris was strong and clever and very ambitious. He had Tartar blood in his veins, and Tartar fierceness and cunning. So it came that he got the power into his hands. No one could approach the Czar except by the help of Boris. And it was Boris who sat in state in the great hall of the palace, and received the envoys of foreign kings.

Now Boris said in his mind, "I will be Czar after the death of Feodor." Three people stood in his way. One was Dmitri, Feodor's brother; the others a cousin of Feodor's and her daughter.

Then Boris looked at these with eyes full of evil and dark intent. And with soft words and gentle promises he prevailed on this cousin and her daughter

to come and live in Russia. But presently when men asked, "Where is Feodor's cousin?" they heard she was in a convent. Soon after her daughter died rather suddenly and was buried. Then men began to say dark things as to how she had met her death.

Now only Dmitri, the young prince, stood between Boris and the throne. One day the great alarm-bell of the palace rang out suddenly. Dmitri's mother and friends rushed out into the court. There lay Dmitri on the ground, dead, with his throat cut. At the sight Dmitri's friends grew full of rage and suspicion, and they seized Boris's friends who were there, and put them to death.

When Boris heard of that he sent his men down to find out, so he said, how Dmitri had met his death. These said boldly, "The prince has died a natural death, and has not been murdered." After that they put to death Dmitri's friends for killing the friends of Boris.

So the last hindrance was gone. Boris had only to wait for Feodor's death.

Boris ruled for Feodor well and wisely in many ways. He made war in Poland, and was victorious. But the people never loved him, for they whispered one to another, "It was by Boris's order that Dmitri was slain." So although Boris drove away with a mighty hand a great band of Tartars that came

up to the gates of Moscow, yet the people hated him.

But one great thing which Boris did, not a good thing, but a very bad one, was that he made the Russian peasants serfs. But though it was a deed that brought sorrow and misery on the land, yet in some ways it seemed good.

In the time of Ivan the Great, when he was trying to throw off the Tartar yoke, he got help from the nobles—help of money and men. Then to reward them he gave them land.

But this land was of no value unless it was dug and sown and planted. And for that the nobles needed peasants who would live on the land. And the more peasants there were to cultivate the land, the more valuable it was.

So the rich nobles began to try to have as many peasants on their lands as possible. And to persuade them to come, they promised them advantages of different sorts. Then the peasants left the smaller nobles, who were not able to promise them anything, and went to the rich ones.

So the small nobles found themselves very poor. Their land was of no use without labourers. And it became almost impossible for them to provide any soldiers in time of war, for they had neither men enough, nor money to arm them.

Boris Godounov saw this difficulty very plainly.



He saw that the army suffered for it, and the small nobles suffered. So he began to think that he would solve the difficulty by settling the number of peasants for each estate, and then by making a law to forbid them to move from one master to another,—in short, by making them serfs. Another reason for his doing this was that he would by it gain the friendship of the small nobles. The rich boyards hated his power too much ever to be his friends.

So in the year 1590 the Russian peasants became serfs. Eight years after that Feodor died. He was the last of the race of Ivan.

Who was to reign? Who but Boris Godounov.

At first he made as though he would not take the crown. That was his cunning. He waited till the whole nation should ask him, in order that when he was once king he might have nothing to fear. The nobles, who felt that no other could be king, said to the people, "Feodor wished Boris to be king, and hung a gold chain round his neck. Remember, too, his good ruling and his skill in war."

Then the nation sent to beseech him to reign, and Boris reigned. He had gained his end at last. His heart swelled with pride, and he hoped to be the first of a long race of descendant kings. But though he knew it not, bloody hands were to wipe out the last trace of Boris's family, as Boris's bloody hands had wiped out Ivan's children.

His reign was glorious. He fought well with Poland and Turkey and the Khan of Siberia. His fame spread far and wide, till the European sovereigns tried to make friends with him.

Boris sent an envoy to England to ask for the help of Queen Elizabeth against Turkey, and to reprove her because she had already helped Turkey. "For," so ran Boris's message, "the Queen should help Christian kings, and not infidel Mohammedans." When Queen Elizabeth received his envoy she rose to listen to him. And when he had ended she bowed her head and asked after the health of Boris.

Boris invited many artists and generals and learned men to his Court. He built the tower of Ivan the Great, and had a bell cast for it, so large that it was called the Queen of Bells. He sent also young Russians to Europe to learn arts and sciences there.

But a sorcerer had foretold that Boris should only reign for seven years; and the end of the seven years was drawing near. Great troubles came upon the land. There was a fierce revolt of the nobles, and much bloodshed. Then a frightful famine came upon the land, and after that a plague. And the hungry peasants and servants of the exiled nobles formed bands of brigands, and went about robbing and plundering.

And men said, "These are signs of great evil

to come upon the land." Suddenly a report arose, and spread swiftly from mouth to mouth, "Dmitri is alive after all, and he is coming to conquer Russia."

A young monk had been living at a monastery on the White Sea. One day he said to his fellow-monks, "Do you know that some day I shall be Czar of Moscow?" At that Boris ordered him to be shut up in prison. But he escaped, and wrote to the people of Moscow, saying, "I am Dmitri." After that he joined the Cossacks.

Then he began to collect followers round him. And many were ready to come because of the usurper Boris. And all the peasants, who were full of wrath at Boris's deed in making them serfs, were eager to join this pretender and depose Boris. The King of Poland, too, ordered his nobles to help Dmitri.

Gradually in Poland Dmitri gathered an army of Poles and of banished Russians. And in 1604 he marched over the frontier into Russia.

Boris sent an army against him. But the soldiers said to each other, "What if this should be really Dmitri?" So they would not fight their hardest, and though the pretender was beaten, he suffered little loss. And all the country began to rise as he came near. Then at this moment of danger Boris died.

The moment he was dead the soldiers refused to fight for a Godounov; and Dmitri marched unat-

tacked to Moscow. Then those who befriended him in the city arose and killed Godounov's wife and sons. So ended the line of Boris Godounov.

Then came a time of trouble and of change.

The false Dmitri reigned at Moscow. He was kindly and gentle. But he cared little for Russian customs and Russian ways. So gradually his men grew discontented with him, and longed for a really Russian king.

A party of them agreed to murder him. Their leader was Chouisky, a boyard. And one morning early the false Dmitri heard the sound of the clanging of bills, and looking out from the palace he saw Chouisky and his men entering the Kremlin armed.

Then he tried to flee; and to save himself he jumped out of a window on to some scaffolding; but he missed his footing and fell. Then Chouisky's men seized him, and proclaimed to the people, "This is not Dmitri, but a pretender."

Then they killed him. And in ghastly mockery they laid the body with a mask on its breast and bagpipes to its mouth, to show that the Czar had used witchcraft to deceive the people.

After he was dead the men of Moscow chose Chouisky as their Czar. He was one of the descendants of Rurik the Norseman.



Then came a fearful time of deceit and bloodshed and misery. One man after another arose and declared that he was Dmitri, or a son of Ivan the Terrible.

One of these was called the Touchino Rogue, because he had set up his camp at Touchino, near Moscow. Round him gathered many thousand Poles and Russians. He gained town after town, until it seemed as though he would take the whole of Russia.

But the brother of Chouisky the Czar was a brave and a noble man, and to save the Russians from their troubles, he asked the King of Sweden to give him help. Then, with a large army of Swedes and Russians, he marched into Moscow. He fought against the Touchino Rogue, and it seemed that the victory was on his side. But just at that moment he died. Some say he was poisoned.

After that Chouisky was not Czar much longer. For the Touchino Rogue marched on Moscow, and took it. And he forced Chouisky to become a monk.

So ended the reign of the last descendant of Rurik. Men said that, on the night before his fall, great wailing had been heard at midnight in the Church of the Kremlin. Then a ghostly voice read out a mass for the dead, and at its end the sounds of wailing rose again, and died away.

After Chouisky's fall, Ladislav, the son of the King of Poland, was chosen Czar. But only by the Moscow nobles, not by the Russian nation. Soon after the Touchino Rogue died. Then the friends of Ladislav remained his friends no longer. For they had only chosen him that the Touchino Rogue might not reign. And they began to say one to another, "Can we have a Pole and a Romanist to be the Czar of Russia?"

So there were revolts, and great battles between the Poles and the Russians. One night flames shot up and reddened the sky above Moscow. For the Poles had set it on fire to burn out the Russians. Then at the news of the quarrels in Moscow false Dmitris and pretenders rose again in great numbers, so that the whole land was full of strife and blood.

And the people of Russia were in misery as dark as in the darkest Tartar days. And it was the worse because it was the Russians themselves who were the authors of the war and the misery. And none knew to whom to turn for help, or how peace could ever come back to Russia.

Then in the midst of the misery the Russian priests resolved to help the land to help herself. So the abbot of the Troitsa Monastery sent out priests from town to town. And they bore this message to all the people: "It is for you, people of

Russia, to end this war and trouble, and choose a Czar who shall reign rightfully and bring peace." They told them, too, of a vision that a good man in Novgorod had seen. He had seen in the night two saints, who came and spoke, "Let the Russians arise and repent of their sins, and their sorrows shall have an end."

Then a solemn fast was held throughout the land, and all took part in it, down to the very children. So for three days the Russians humbled themselves before God, and prayed that, at the prayer and striving of her people, peace might come back to Russia.

Then a mighty assembly was held at Nijni Novgorod, on the river Volga. And there were gathered merchants and peasants, and all who longed for the good of Russia, and they waited breathlessly to hear what they should do. And the priest stood forth, and said to the people, "Stand ye fast by the holy faith, and fight for love of our fatherland."

Then stood forth the butcher Minine, and he spoke in words straight and brave, that braced the hearts of the men who heard him. These were his words: "If we wish to save our country Russia, we must spare neither our lands nor our goods. Let us sell our houses, and put our wives and children to service. Let us seek a man

who will fight for the faith, and march under his banner."

And the assembly, as they heard his words, felt that they were good. And in a steady soberness of purpose they sent men to find them a leader.

And a leader was found, an old Prince Pojarsky, a man full of courage, who had fought and suffered for Russia. Then the rest of the men formed themselves into an army, strong and brave, each man wishing to save Russia or to die, led by the prince and the butcher Minine.

On they marched to Moscow. And there they attacked boldly and patiently. No force could hold out against the brave nation, and the Poles gave in, and opened the gates.

Then in solemn order in marched the Russian army. First went the priests with icons and crosses. And from the Kremlin to meet them came the Archbishop of Archangel, and in his hand he carried the holy picture of the Virgin, which the Russians loved so well; and as they looked, it seemed to them a sign of the favour of God and the peace that should come.

So the Russians had freed Russia; and peace had come back to her through the love of her children. That was a great deed of a noble nation.

Then in solemn assembly, and with lawful ceremonies, they chose their Czar. And their choice fell



on Michael Romanov, son of the great and well-known family.

So in the summer of that year he was crowned Czar, and his descendants are reigning still. For a change that a nation makes is not to be unmade.

## CHAPTER XI.

### GAINING STRENGTH.

BUT young Michael Romanov had not come to an easy life, or a kingdom at peace. For all over the wide land of Russia were Poles and Cossacks, and bands of hungry peasants turned robbers. The Swedes, too, had taken the city of Novgorod and other cities. Worse than this, the boyards began again to plot and be jealous, and quarrel for power. And Michael was only sixteen.

But the love of country that had brought a lawful king helped the Russians through their troubles. David killed first the lion and bear, and then he did not fail to kill Goliath. The Russians had put down the false pretenders, now they turned to kill giant enemies of the country.

Michael was the more unhappy because his wise father Philarete was captive to the Poles, so that he could not advise him. However, Michael did his best. He sent a messenger to England, and persuaded King James to send them an envoy to

help them to restore peace. This envoy persuaded the King of Sweden to make peace, and give up Novgorod and other cities. For Russia had been like a garden left without an owner. Many people would come in and pick flowers; so they had taken away Russian property. Now the owner had come back, many gave up what they had taken.

But there was one thief that would not give up his spoils. That was the King of Poland, who said that he was Czar of Russia. Michael went to war with him. But after a bit peace was made, and they exchanged prisoners. So Philarete, Michael's father, came back to Russia.

Then better times began. Philarete showed the jealous grasping boyards that they must behave like Christian men. During the time he was alive, Russia began to make friends with many European countries. When Fletcher had come to Russia in the time of Ivan the Terrible, he had been quite surprised to find that the Russians were Christian; for he had thought they were heathen barbarians. Now European countries thought of Russia as almost one of themselves.

One splendid act of the time of Michael was, that he assembled the Russian people to decide upon great questions.

Presently war broke out again with Poland. For the Polish king died, and Michael thought it was a

good chance for him. So he sent an army into Poland. But the generals quarrelled so much, and knew so little about war, that the Poles conquered the army twice. Then Michael made peace, and it was agreed that the Russians should pay money and Ladislas should give up the title of Czar, and promise to try to gain Russia no more. Then men hoped that was the end of wars with Poland; but alas! it was not so.

Michael did much good for Russia by inviting artists and merchants and workmen from all countries to come into Russia. Only he would not allow tobacco, for the Russians thought it was wrong. Books were written, and schools founded. So when Michael died, Russia was beginning again to be one whole country.

When Michael died, Alexis his son became king. He was easy-tempered and good. People said, "Even in his greatest rages, the Czar never goes beyond kicks and cuffs," and that was great praise. He was weak, and let his ministers govern him. However, the minister who got power over him was learned and clever.

It was still very hard to govern well. For the Russians were poor through their long miseries, and were hardly pressed by taxes for the wars. So they were ready to revolt, and did revolt; and it took a clever man to deal wisely with them.



Happily for Russia, the Poles were in such trouble at home that they could not think of fighting any enemies. And the cause of their troubles was the same cause as that of the Russian troubles—that they were always fighting each other.

They fought for the sake of their forms of religion. The people who lived in two of the provinces of Poland, called Little Russia and White Russia, were Russians and Greek Christians, while the Poles, who really governed the country, were Romanists.

These Poles hated the Russian Greek Christians, and would not give them fair judgment, and were often cruel to them, and tried hard to make them become Romanists. When the Russians could bear it no longer, they ran away and joined the Cossacks in the Ukraine. The Ukraine was a kind of wild pasture-land, and the Poles to get it cultivated had promised thirty years' liberty to any one who would go there. The people who went there were called Cossacks, and they grew up free and bold, and fought bravely, galloping about on their horses. And when the Russians ran away and joined them, they would not give them up again to their masters. At that the Poles and Cossacks went to war.

Presently Alexis joined the Cossacks, and helped them, and then a weary war went on for many years, till at last, after thirteen years, peace was

made, and it was settled that the Cossacks and part of Little Russia should belong to Russia.

But the Russians did not know what troublesome subjects they had got, though they were soon taught, for the Cossacks rose up under a great captain called Stenko Razine, and tried to get free from Russia, and make a kingdom of their own. Stenko Razine was killed, and the revolt stopped, but the Cossacks know wild songs about him to this day.

During Alexis' reign the Russians began to learn more and more. There was a clever priest, whose name was Nikon, who taught them much, though he made them very angry.

He corrected many mistakes in the Russian Bible, and altered a few customs of the Church. Because he did this, the people who loved their old ways became discontented. They would sooner have died than have spelt words right when they had been used to spell them wrong, because they did not understand, and thought that Nikon was wickedly altering the Bible.

Then all who did not hold the doctrines of the Russian Church entirely began also to make a disturbance. Alexis took the side of Nikon, and was foolish enough to punish and put to death those Raskolniks, as they were called.

Many Russians began to be learned, and to write books. They wrote about how Russia was wrong,

and what she ought to do to put herself right. They all said that the Russians were still ignorant and barbarous, and that they ought to get learning and civilisation.

One man came to Russia, called Kriganitch. There were three things he wanted to do. First, he wanted to write a Slav Grammar, so that the Russians and other Slavs might speak correctly. Secondly, he wanted to write a true history of the Slavs. Thirdly, he wanted to keep them from being deceived by other nations. He is the first of the Slavophiles—that means, of the lovers of the Slav race. After that there were many others who wished to join all the Slavs into one great nation, with a language of their own.

Now, for the very first time of all, the Russians began to have theatres and act. They acted plays out of the Bible; and very funny they must have been, for they did not know how to act or speak. Still, their acting was a good thing, and gradually, as the people learned more, the acting grew better.

It was in Alexis' reign that an envoy was sent to England, and had very funny adventures. For he got to London in the very middle of the great rebellion, when the king and the Parliament were fighting. "Where is the king?" asked the Russian envoy of the merchants at the port.

"We do not exactly know," they said, "for there has been a war with the king. The king wished to rule after his own will, and Parliament could not allow that. The Parliament, you know, is made of two bodies of men—one is the nobles, and the other the men chosen by the common people."

When the Russian envoy heard that, he could not understand it at all. For in Russia, as you know, the Czar's will was law, and there was no parliament to say him nay. So he went on saying that he must see the king. "Have you a letter for the Parliament?" they said. "No," he answered, "I have nothing for the Parliament; the Parliament must send me at once to the king."

When he found that they were not going to take him there, he wanted to go away, but that the Parliament would not allow.

Next year he was brought before the House of Lords, which he called the assembly of the boyards.

There he made a very angry speech, and complained that they had not let him see the king. The chief "boyard" was very polite to him, but the envoy went back to Russia ill pleased, and so was Alexis when he heard it.

Next year, when he heard of the beheading of Charles I., he forbade English merchants to live in the inland towns of Russia.



In 1676 Alexis died.

His son reigned, called Feodor, but of his reign there is little to be said. He had a fierce war with the Turks about the Ukraine, but he conquered. The chief thing he did was to found a school at Moscow, where Latin and Greek and theology were to be taught. Now we will leave him and go on to Peter the Great himself.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GREAT CZAR : TRAVELS AND TROUBLES.

THE Great Czar ! Who was he, and why was he great ? Perhaps some day you may go to Russia, and, if you do, travel northward towards the Gulf of Finland. You will go through miles and miles of forest and morass, dark and dank and lonely, and suddenly you will burst upon a great magnificent city, like a jewel cast away in a marsh.

And round it flow the blue cold waters of the Neva, and it stands up, gorgeous with granite palaces, lofty and high. And in the midst of the great square stands a vast statue—a man on a horse, standing on a huge block of granite, and looking straight out to Europe across the Gulf of Finland. There it stands, though the waters of the Gulf have rushed inland and roared round it many times.

And that city is St. Petersburg, the window into Europe, and that man is Peter the Great, its founder.

And his mind was huge, like the statue, above that of other men, and his perseverance, like the granite, standing firm for ever. And as he worked for Russia he ever looked out to Europe, till he won her glory abroad, and made her take her place in the rank of the nations once and for ever.

Yet if you had lived then you would not have felt certain that Peter would ever be really Czar at all, though he and his half brother, a poor idiotic boy called Ivan, were crowned Czars.

For Peter had a step-sister, by name Sophia. Some say she was a noble woman, full of love for her country, some that she was vulgar and bold and fat, and had a moustache like a man's. All agree that she was very clever.

However this may be, the Streltsi, who were full of rebellion, made up their mind that Sophia should help to rule Russia. So they marched against the Kremlin with cannons, crying out that "Peter's friends have killed Ivan, and we must take vengeance."

And although they saw Ivan alive, they plundered the palace for a week. They looked under the beds and the altar, and killed any they found in hiding. At last they agreed to be peaceful if Sophia was to reign till Ivan and Peter grew old enough to rule themselves.

So Sophia reigned, and either from good or bad reasons she was very glad to reign.

Peter grew up a strong tall boy, with bright eyes and an eager mind. He did little lessons, but he loved to read of the old Russian kings and the battles they fought.

One day he happened to go into an old storehouse of rubbish. In the corner was a boat turned bottom upwards. Now Peter, who had lived inland, had never seen a boat before. So he asked, "What is that?" And they showed him. Then he jumped for joy, and after that made many boats and sailed in them. Do not forget that little old boat. It was the grandfather of the Russian fleet.

Now all this time Ivan was growing more weakly and idiotic. The Streltsi, when they saw the brothers, said one to another, "Ivan is a poor idiot, but Peter will make a fine Czar." Besides that, they did not like being ruled by a woman. So one day they came to Peter and said, "We will not serve Sophia any longer; you shall be our Czar." So Peter sent Sophia away to a convent, and there she lived till the day of her death.

Now that Peter was Czar he could do what he had a mind to. And above all things he longed to see the sea and the mighty ships. So he sailed down the Dwina in his painted barge till he reached the great city Archangel, on the Icy Sea. Then he stood on the sea-shore, and watched the great green waves rise and come breaking in foam with strong



sweep along the beach. And when he saw that he could not speak for wonder.

Many days he passed there, sailing and making ships with his own hands. He would not be called Czar, but only Skipper Peter.

While he was there the great merchant ships came in to fetch furs and hemp and tallow.

But Peter's heart was full of sorrow when he saw that there was no Russian ship among them. Then Skipper Peter vowed that Russia too should have ships. Now read how the Czar Peter kept that vow.

There was one great difficulty. Where were the ships to sail from? You remember how few doors the Russians had, and how the harbours on the Icy Ocean were locked half the year. For the rest, the Swedes held all the doors on the Baltic, and the Turks held the Black Sea.

Now the Russians ever hated the Turks, and loved to fight them; and so Peter, bold as brass, declared aloud to all his men, "We will fight the Turks and conquer the ports on the Black Sea, and Russia shall have a fleet."

So he led his army against the mighty city Azov, on the Black Sea. But it was built all round about with walls strong and thick. Peter worked hard among his soldiers, and filled shells and bombs like any other man, and shouted and fought boldly. But

it was of no use. There was no fleet to attack Azov by sea, and the Russians were forced to go home again. But Peter was not a whit abashed, and they made a long procession into Moscow, though all they had to show was one poor prisoner.

Then, as he saw he could not do without ships, he set to work at once to make them. He was in such a hurry that they were all built of green wood. Besides that, many workmen ran away on the sly, and there was a great fire in the dockyard. Yet Peter worked on. And at last a few ships were made, very shabby and clumsy; but Peter did not care at all, and set sail down the Don in good heart. Then the Russians made a breach in the city walls, and fought bravely; and at length the city had to beg for peace, and the Russians had conquered.

You are surprised, and so was all Europe when they heard it. And they began to think that Russia was worth considering after all. As for the Russian army, they made another much grander procession into Moscow, under green arches, with pictures and inscriptions,—all the officers, in new uniforms, sitting in gorgeous carriages.

"But where is the Czar?" asked all the people watching. Where was he, do you think? Marching among the common soldiers, in the neat light dress of a German ship-captain. The old Muscovites shook their heads and said, "What a want of dignity!

how shocking!" Little they thought that Peter was so great that it did not matter if he looked great or not.

What Peter did next shocked his people still more. He sent fifty young nobles to Venice to learn shipbuilding.

More than that, he himself took a journey into Europe. For he saw that Russia was behind the rest of Europe, and determined it should be so no longer.

He went quite quietly, and would not be called Czar. First to Prussia, where the Germans were much surprised to see how clever and how shy and how bad-mannered he was all at once.

Then to Holland to learn shipbuilding. He worked like a common sailor. One day, when a noble wanted to see him, the ship-master called out, "Peter, why don't you help the others to lift that beam?" Peter did it without a word. He learned other things in Holland,—paper-making, and how to pull out teeth, which he enjoyed practising on his courtiers. But he found out that in Holland they only made ships by the rule of thumb, and said he could only learn rightly in England.

So he went to England. He would not go to see King William III., because he said it was waste of time.

Then he left England, and was going to Venice,

when he heard such bad news from home that he had to go back at once.

What was happening? It was the Streltsi again. They had had great sufferings. Azov had been a glorious victory for Peter, but after it the poor soldiers had been separated from their wives and children, and sent to live there to keep the city safe. They thought that it was all the fault of the Germans, who were Peter's friends. They sent great complaints to Moscow of their treatment, and this was part of what they said, "Moscow is full of horrors, and Germans are coming there who shave their beards and smoke tobacco, which is a sin." For the Russians thought it wrong to cut their beards. Then the Russian nobles sent an army against them, and took many prisoners, and wrote to Peter to tell him that the Streltsi were rebelling.

When Peter got back he found that Moscow too was very nearly rebelling, for they too hated Germans. Peter was angry and stern. He feared that Sophia was at the bottom of this rebellion.

He had all the Streltsi sent one by one into the torture-chamber. That was a ghastly place. Some were beaten with rods till they died, others roasted over a slow fire, and others beaten with the terrible knout.

He had great gallows put up all over the Red Place. And the Streltsi were brought out two and



two in carts, back to back, with tied arms, and lighted candles in their hands. Their wives and children ran by the carts crying, and the people of Moscow stood still with pale faces, and cursed Peter under their breath. Then for three months the bodies hung swinging in the wind, and the heads on tops of pikes, as a warning to the people of Moscow from the great Czar Peter.

Then Peter determined that he would try to bring in European customs and manners.

The first things he tried to alter were beards. No one in Europe had beards, so Peter ordered the Russian nobles to cut theirs off. Some did not like it, and one even dared to come to dine with the Czar with his beard on. Then Peter caught hold of his beard with one hand, and a knife with the other, and off it came,—not very pleasantly either.

With the people it was a different thing. The merchants and the serfs said that the Bible said that man was made in the image of God, and as a beard was part of the image, it ought not to be touched. Peter was at last forced to allow them to pay a tax if they liked instead of cutting off their beards. That was hard on the poor.

The long caftans were the next things to be shortened. Any one who tried to come into the town with a long caftan on was forced to kneel down, and the police officer, with a large knife, cut

the caftan short to the knees, like the little woman and the pedlar whose name was Stout. Some laughed, and others were vexed.

The third thing he did was more important. You remember how the women in Ivan's time were allowed to see no men, and even put out their tongues to the doctor through a hole in the curtain. Peter found, when he travelled in Europe, that men and women there met face to face. So he resolved to have large parties, at which men and women were to meet, and he forced the nobles to have these in turn. At first they did not succeed very well; chiefly because all the ladies were very shy and strange, and sat in a row on benches round the wall, and got very red if a man spoke to them. Presently, of course, they got used to it.

I tell you these little things that Peter did to show you how he was determined to make Russia like the rest of Europe, and how he thought he could do it all by laws and rules, however much the people disliked it.

One other thing you must remember. Peter would not let his courtiers pay him slavish respect as before. If they tried to kneel before him, or bowed very low, he beat them till they stood straight again. For he thought that it was not good for the Russians to behave like slaves.

But what Peter now really wished with his whole

heart was to have a European army. Two things stood in his way; or rather, one thing in two places. The first was the Cossacks of the Don, and the second the Cossacks of Little Russia. Peter watched his chance.

Presently the Cossacks on the Don revolted. Then Peter took terrible vengeance on them. For he sent his army there, and these took the Cossacks, and killed hundreds of them, and tied the dead bodies on boats and sent them floating down the Don to strike terror into the hearts of all who saw them. After that the Don Cossacks gave him little trouble.

The Cossacks in Little Russia had a very cunning captain called Mazeppa. Some day you will read a poem called Mazeppa's Ride. Mazeppa was like Peter, in wanting to make Little Russia a kingdom of his own. But there were two people who objected to this. One was Peter, and the other the King of Sweden. Mazeppa was very clever, and for a long time he managed to make both Peter and the King of Sweden think that he was on their side. But at last a day came when he heard that Peter and the King of Sweden had gone to war, and Peter wrote to him to tell him to bring his troops to fight the King of Sweden.

Then Mazeppa, after thinking a little, got into bed, and sent word to Peter that he was very ill.

Presently the news came that both armies were coming close. Mazeppa then knew he must make his choice, so he got out of bed and marched with his army to join the King of Sweden. When Peter heard this, he marched against Mazeppa's capital, and took and burnt it, and killed some of the people of the city; others he took away to work for him; and so broke up their tribe. So that was the last of the difficulties gone in the way of making his army great.

But who was this King of Sweden?

He was as great and as strange a man in his way as Peter was. One day one of his generals tried to persuade him not to carry out a certain plan, because it was extraordinary. Then King Charles answered, "Yes, we must do exactly what is extraordinary; that is the way to win fame and glory."

When he was a boy he had been rough and rude, and had thought it a great joke to throw cherry-stones at his counsellors and smash the furniture. Later on, he got wiser; and he was always honourable and brave. He was like an old sea-king, and loved only fighting and glory. But he never spared himself any more than he spared his soldiers.

So you may imagine that he was a dangerous enemy for Peter, because he was so fierce and so daring. His army, too, was far better than Peter's,—the greatest army in Europe at the time.



But the great Czar Peter feared nothing, and so he did not fear the King of Sweden. He was thirsting to get harbours for Russia, and made up his mind to take from him a great port on the Baltic called Narva.

The Russian army came marching up, 63,000 of them, and Peter arranged them in order of battle, for he heard that the Swedes were close.

But he arranged them very badly, in some places only a single line deep. Behind them was the wall of earth that guarded their camp. There they waited.

Presently it began to snow, and the snow fell thicker and thicker, till it was like a thick white veil, hiding everything from them. Suddenly there was a cry, and a shout of terror from the front rank, for quite suddenly and quietly through the blinding snow the Swedes had crept up and were upon them.

The soldiers in the rear, not knowing why they cried out, thought that their officers had betrayed them, and began to turn upon them and kill them, and then ran away as hard as they could run.

Only Peter did not run away. He, and a few men with him, made a sort of wall in front of them with the baggage-wagons, and fought bravely.

But soon, looking round, they saw that they were quite alone on the field. Then they knew it was of

no use to try to fight. So, sadly and with heavy hearts, they came to terms; and the Russian army straggled back in disgrace to Moscow.

But Peter's heart was not heavy for long. He was too full of hope. The King of Sweden went off after the King of Poland, who was helping Peter, and while he was away Peter had cannons and guns made out of the bells of the churches, and drilled his soldiers.

A year after Narva the Russian general actually beat some of the Swedes in a fierce battle. The bells of Moscow rang all day, and the Swedish guns and banners were carried about the streets. Peter shouted out, "Glory to God! One day we will beat the Swedes."

And at last they took Narva itself.

It was a glorious time for Peter.

That was not the end of the war. Peter went on helping the King of Poland against Charles, till Charles, to put a stop to it, determined to march into Russia, kill Peter, and make Russia his own kingdom.

When Peter heard that he drew in his breath for fear, in spite of all his boldness. For he was busy with the Cossacks, who were rebelling. So, rather bitterly and reluctantly, he asked for peace. But he might have spared his pains, for Charles answered, "I will treat with the Czar in Moscow."

On marched the Swedish army, and the Russians fell back before them. But, happily for Peter, a more mighty enemy was fighting against the Swedes. That was the terrible winter cold. So cold it was, that the very birds in the air fell dead. The Swedish soldiers were badly clad, and had very mouldy bread to eat, for Charles was in too great haste to be prudent. Hundreds and hundreds fell down and died, and still Charles marched on, while the Russians hung about his track like wolves.

At last he reached the town of Pultowa, and there he stayed to wait for the Turks, who had promised to join him. He felt dull, and so he attacked Pultowa to pass the time.

The Russians drew near at last, and then Charles turned on them. The Swedes came on at a furious charge. Charles had hurt his foot, and was dragged in a litter by horses, but he was with them. As they came galloping on, the Russian horse-soldiers gave way in terror.

But the foot-soldiers were braver, and they came forward, and planted their pikes to stop the Swedes. Presently more came on, and cut the army of the Swedes in two.

Then the Russians took heart, and charged gallantly, and the Swedes fled before them. Charles himself, proud Charles, was forced to gallop away on a horse.

The day was won. The news spread over the whole of Europe from town to town. And men said to each other, "The Russians have beaten the Swedes; Russia must be a mighty nation."

And Peter was glad at heart and triumphant, for he felt that now Russia had proved herself strong enough to stand among European nations.

This was in 1709.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE GREAT CZAR : HIS REFORMS.

PETER set to work to make his people better and more civilised, but it was not an easy or a pleasant work. For the people loved their old ways simply because they were old, and, being ignorant and foolish in many ways, they thought that the Germans had got power over Peter to make him change old customs.

Now Peter brought in many good things. He taught the people to till their land better than they had been used to do. He taught them also better ways of making shoes, and ships, and many other things. But the people grumbled, and said, "Old ways are best."

One thing he did which vexed them very much. He changed the beginning of the year from September to January, so that they might count their year like the other European people. The peasants thought that this was very wrong, "for," they said, "apples are not ripe in January, so Eve

could not have been tempted then." And they thought that Peter was contradicting the Bible, and called him the Great Antichrist.

They made up a fairy story, which they repeat now. They said that the Czar went to the castle of a witch in Norway. The witch fried him, and then threw him into prison. Then she was going to put him into a barrel full of nails and roll him into the sea, only somehow he escaped. But he never came back to Russia, and the Czar who pretended to be Peter was, they said, really a German.

But when Peter went to war the people suffered terribly. For their children were carried off to be soldiers, and their money was taken to pay for the soldiers' arms and food. These poor peasants did not want the glory they won. What they wanted was to live at home happily with all their friends round them. So they hated Peter, while they liked the Czars who made no wars and wanted no men for soldiers. And of Peter they said, "Since God has sent him to be the Czar we have no happy days. The village is weighed down with providing roubles and half-roubles." And the women wailed, and cried, "He has taken all our husbands to be soldiers, and left us to weep all our lives long."

Another thing that Peter did made the peasants still more unhappy. There had been three sorts of

peasants,—those that were free and owned their own land, those that had to pay half they got to their masters, those that belonged to the land and were bought and sold with it. Peter made these three sorts all alike. He arranged that all should be bought and sold with the land they lived on. That was a hard and unjust measure.

The rest of what Peter did was very good. He did much, as I said, to help the people to manufacture things better. He built schools, too, and taught in them geography and history and languages, and how to manage a ship. Latin and Greek he thought were of no use.

Then, too, he built hospitals, and would no longer allow deformed babies to be killed. Besides this, he kept order in the streets of Moscow, and ordered that people should not hit each other, or push each other into the mud.

But one of the reforms that gave him the most trouble was the reform of the government. There was one governor for each town and province, who settled everything, and settled it very badly. This Peter altered for the better. It is too long to tell you exactly how. Only he arranged that these governors were not each to settle everything in their province, but there were to be different sorts of governors—one for the criminal law, one for money affairs, and so on.

At the head of all was a council made of nobles. You may tell how rough they were by hearing what rule Peter was forced to make. He had to order them not to cry out, or thump each other, or call each other thieves.

Peter did not interfere with the *Mirs* at all. That was very wise of him, and showed his greatness.

When all these arrangements were settled, he had a great deal of trouble in making his officers do their duty. For they were very fond of stealing, and did not judge fairly, but judged in favour of those who gave them most money.

Peter was very anxious that fair judgment should always be given; and if he found any of them taking bribes, he had them up before his court, whether they were nobles or peasants, and there he beat them with the knout, and some he hung. You must remember that whatever mistakes Peter made, he did mean to give Russia a good government, and to have all things fair and just as far as he could see.

One day Peter actually began to dictate to one of his nobles a decree, saying that he would punish any official with death who even took the value of a rope as a bribe. But the noble, instead of writing, said, "Has your Majesty thought as to what will be the result of this order?" "Go on writing," said Peter, who was very obstinate. "Do you wish to be left quite alone in Russia?" said the noble; "we



all steal,—some more, some less, but more cleverly.” Peter laughed, and did not go on.

Peter was no easier a master to the nobles than to the peasants. He made strict laws about their lands, and forced them to serve either in the army or navy or law-courts for many years.

The work that Peter liked best of all was his plans for the city St. Petersburg. Directly after the battle of Pultowa he wrote to one of his generals, saying, “I feel as if the first stone of St. Petersburg was laid.” The first stone had really been laid about six years before. You know what the country was like. The great Neva separated into four branches, besides which there were numberless little rivers running into it. But the land did not look at all fit for a city, for it was all marshy islands, with dreary dull plains about it, and dark forests stretching away on each side. But we know why Peter wanted to build his city there; because he wanted a window into Europe. He ordered labourers to come, and, as they had no spades, they had to dig out the earth with their nails or with sticks, and carry it in their long caftans. When that was done great stakes of wood had to be driven in close to each other, for the marsh was not firm enough to support a house. The poor workmen slept in the open air, and often had not enough food to eat, so that they died by thousands. This was in 1703. Peter lived

in a little wooden house by the water's edge, and wrote home, "Oh, oh I am so happy ; I am in paradise."

A few years later Peter visited it again, and this time it was flooded, so that all the houses were many feet deep in water. Peter was very much amused, and said, "It is quite funny to see how people sit on the roofs and trees, as they did in the time of the deluge."

To get the streets paved he obliged every boat that came to bring some stones ; and to get houses built he obliged each of the great nobles to build a stone house there.

The streets were not lighted for many years, and wolves wandered in them at night. There were a great many fires, and many robberies and murders.

Peter used to spend busy days there, getting up to settle his affairs with the ministers at three o'clock in the morning, and then seeing how the shipbuilding was getting on, and often working at his lathe till eleven o'clock, when he had dinner. After dinner he went to sleep for an hour, as most people do in Russia, and in the afternoon he walked about to look at the work. In the evening he went to some of his assemblies, or stayed at home with his family, and went to bed about ten. The palaces he had built were rather mean little places, for he liked low rooms and disliked smart furniture.

Peter had a good deal of trouble in making St.

Petersburg the capital. The people had got so used to trading with European merchants at Archangel that they did not like to change, particularly as the roads to St. Petersburg were very bad. Besides that, they were afraid of the Swedes taking their ships if they sailed down the Baltic. Peter, to alter this, had a canal cut to join the Neva to the Volga, and he put a tax on everything sold in Archangel, to persuade the people to come to St. Petersburg instead.

Another difficulty was that the nobles all hated St. Petersburg. It was cold and ugly and uncomfortable, and a long way from Moscow. They all hated going in boats, and there was nothing to amuse them—no old churches and relics and historical monuments—as at Moscow. Besides which, in order to save wood, they were not allowed to heat their bath-houses more than once a week, and as Russians love nothing more than baths, this made them very cross. They all hoped that St. Petersburg would be deserted. But Peter took pains that it should not. He had gardens laid out, and forced people to come and live there till there were about a hundred thousand there. He knew that it was of great use to Russia to have a window to look at Europe.

You must remember that all these changes were made gradually, while the war was going on with Sweden. They are only put together to help you to remember them.

Now we come to the second part of Peter's reign, from 1709 till 1725.

They were not very happy years. There was a war with Turkey which ended sadly, though it began very happily. The Russians were always eager to fight the Turks, and so the great army marched against the mighty Constantinople full of hope.

But the Turks fell on them fiercely, and the army was almost destroyed. And the proud Czar Peter had to ask for peace, and to give up Azof, his first great conquest. Also he was obliged to destroy his fleet on the Black Sea—that first little fleet which he had built with such hope and such pains so many years ago. That went to Peter's heart most of all.

In 1717 Peter took another journey into Europe, and a very different one.

In his first journey he had been almost a boy, and a boy who did not know European customs. People had looked at him rather as a curiosity which ought to be put under a glass case, or as a strange beast which might bite. Now he was the great conqueror of the Swedes, and had the largest army in Europe. Yet in one way he was the same old Peter still. For instead of calling on the French princes he went and enjoyed himself at a coachbuilder's.

While he was away he made peace with Sweden.





PETER THE GREAT.

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By the peace Russia at last gained her window to look at Europe, and she has never lost it since.

Next year Peter was obliged to come home sooner than he had meant to, again because of bad news.

This was the trouble. He had a son called Alexis, who Peter hoped would be the next Czar. Till he was nine years old his mother had the teaching of him, and she hated Peter's new ways, and taught him to hate them.

Soon after Peter divorced her, and then put Alexis under the charge of his own sister. He meant to teach him well, and gave him foreign tutors. Only he was so often away from home that he could not look after Alexis much, and so Alexis made friends among the people of Moscow, who hated the changes that Peter had made.

Also he did not care for his father much, because they felt so differently about many things. Peter loved activity, and liked to work with his hands, and particularly liked ships and seafaring. Alexis was quiet, and rather lazy, and very fond of reading, but he hated active work, and ships above all. Once, when he was forced to go to see a ship launched, he said, "I would rather be a galley-slave, or have a burning fever, than go to it."

Peter sent Alexis to travel abroad, hoping that he would be interested in learning foreign languages and how to govern. But Alexis would not try to

learn, and once fired a pistol at his hand so that he might not be taught to draw. Sometimes he would take medicine to make himself ill, that he might not have to do unpleasant things.

He did not live a good life. He was very weak-minded, and his friends led him into bad living and drunkenness. He married, and was happier for a little, and Peter hoped better days were coming. But soon he grew careless of his wife, and even let the rain come through the roof into her room without caring about it.

She died two years after her marriage. But the day after she died a son was born to Peter by Catharine, his second wife.

Peter felt that it did not matter much now if Alexis was idle and obstinate, because he now had another son who could be Czar. So he wrote a long letter to Alexis, and said, "You know nothing of military affairs, and you have a bad and obstinate character. How much I have scolded and beaten you for it! but it was all of no use. If you do not change, I will deprive you of your right to the throne."

When Alexis read that, his counsellors told him to say that he did not care about being Czar, but wished to become a monk. "That will keep you safe," they said, "and the monk's cowl cannot be nailed on your head."

Alexis thought this good advice, and wrote his answer to Peter. Peter did not quite believe him,



but it was just at this time that he was starting on his journey to Europe.

As soon as he was gone, Alexis began to lay his plans, for he was longing to be Czar. He fled to Vienna, and thought that the Russians who hated his father's changes would help him.

Then the news of his flight was sent to Peter, and Peter came back to Moscow. He was stern and angry, and he sent messengers out after Alexis, who caught him and brought him back.

Then he came before the Secret Council. He, and all who Peter thought were plotting with him, were tried by torture, and some were horribly put to death.

Peter sat there, calm and stern, and in his presence sentence of death was passed upon Alexis. But Alexis died before it was carried out, for he was weakly, and the torture had told upon him.

So ends a painful chapter of Peter's life. We cannot tell quite how hard he meant to be upon Alexis. There is no doubt that he too suffered in seeing his son suffer. Yet we cannot tell what things the Great Czar would not have done to uphold his authority, and so make Russia more powerful.

Peter did not live much longer. One day at St. Petersburg he saw a boat in distress, and jumped into the water to save it. He caught a chill, and grew worse so rapidly that he was not able to say whom he wished to succeed him.

So in 1725 the Great Czar Peter died.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### GERMAN INFLUENCE.

VERY likely at some time in your life you have admired some people very much, and tried to be like them. You admired them, first of all, for good qualities, which it is good you should try to imitate; but have you not sometimes gone past that, and imitated their little tricks of manner, even if it was better you should not have them?

That is what the Russians did with the Germans. Peter the Great was a sensible and wise man. So he only imitated from the Germans things good and worth imitating. But the Czars who came after him foolishly tried to imitate all German ways, and gave the Germans too much power, as you will soon see.

The first to do this was Peter's German wife, Catharine. The little baby Peter had died, so after much quarrelling Catharine became Empress. She was a clever woman, but a cruel one. Many of the Russians said to one another, "It is not right

that a woman should reign; we will not swear to obey her." When Catharine heard that she was angry, and sent and killed them.

During her reign a great Russian, called Menchikof, who had been great under Peter, gained more and more power. Catharine only reigned two years. When she lay dying she said that Peter, the son of Alexis, was to reign after her.

Peter II. was only twelve years old, and he was a delicate, weakly boy. A council of nobles ruled for him, and Menchikof, in particular, looked after him. He made Peter live in his house, and chose a German tutor for him. But Peter hated study, like his father Alexis.

Menchikof did not remain long at Court. One day when Peter gave a present of £150 to his sister, Menchikof took it away again, and said, "The Czar does not know how to use money properly." Peter was angry at that, and soon afterwards sent Menchikof to Siberia.

But when Menchikof was gone, Peter was almost more miserable than before. For all the nobles quarrelled for the power, and tried to gain Peter's favour by giving him hunting-parties and other pleasures. Yet they never did what he told them. One day his aunt Elizabeth complained to him that she had no money given her. Peter answered sadly, "It is not my fault; they never do what I tell them."

Then Peter's favourite sister died, and he was lonely and miserable. He fell ill of the small-pox, and all the time he tossed about in fever on his bed he kept crying out, "Get ready my sledge; I want to go to my sister." And it was not long before he went to his sister; for he grew weaker and weaker, and died.

I have told you quite shortly about Catharine and Peter, because their reigns did not matter to the Russian people. You must think of a nation, with its classes of poor and rich, as of a growing tree. It is the common people, who dig the ground and work with their hands, that are the roots. Through them the rest of the tree is fed and lives. The nobles and rich people are like the leaves. Now you see that the roots are more important than the leaves. If the roots die there can be no more leaves,—the tree is dead. But the leaves of one year may fall and die; the tree can live still for a while if the roots are alive. Now as soon as poor Peter was dead, a very strange thing almost took place.

You know how Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible, and again Peter the Great, ruled the Russians by their own will alone. The Russian nobles knew that too, and they thought it a bad thing, as indeed it was. But what did they think was better?

There was once upon a time a hole in a city wall,



so the townspeople all collected to settle how it should be mended. First came a carpenter, and said, "Wood is the only thing that is good for the mending of town walls." Then up spoke a smith, and said, "On the contrary, iron is the right thing." Last of all spoke a shoemaker, and he said, "Wood and iron are all very well in their places. But the real thing to mend a wall with is leather."

The Russian nobles were like these tradesmen. "Emperors are all very well in their place," they said, "but the men who ought to be ruling the country are the nobles." Then they said to each other, "We must ask some one to be Emperor who will be so glad of our help to come to the throne that he will promise at once to agree to any laws we like to make." So they chose a princess named Anne. She was the daughter of the poor idiotic Ivan v., Peter the Great's half-brother. She was tall and ugly, with a gruff voice and a sour face.

Then these nobles drew up a paper of four rules, which Anne was to swear to obey. The first rule was that there was to be a High Council of eight nobles, and that the Empress was to do nothing without their advice. Secondly, that she was not to make peace or war, or impose taxes or appoint officers, without the consent of the Council. Thirdly, that she was not to put a noble to death or take away his property without a regular trial. Fourthly,

that she was neither to marry nor choose her successor without the consent of the Council. The paper ended, "And if I break my word about these laws, I forfeit the crown of Russia." And Anne read the paper, and wrote her name, and sealed it with her seal, for she said, "It is the will of the people."

When the Russian people heard of it, they were much troubled. And one said to another, "What will happen now? We shall have eight Czars instead of one." Then Anne sent to them to say, "Come to the great assembly in the hall of the palace." Five hundred men collected there, and listened breathlessly. For they hoped that Anne might have refused to sign the paper.

When they heard that she had signed it, their hearts were full of woe. And all over the hall there was a low murmur, and all trembled. But they dared not speak for fear of the nobles, and silently one by one they signed the paper.

But they did not go quietly home. They determined to tell Anne that the people wished her to reign as the old Czars had reigned. And they sent messages to her by children and by her maids-in-waiting.

Then one day Anne sent to her council of nobles, and said, "Come to the hall of the palace." And when the nobles entered the hall, they saw there hundreds of clergy and of the deputies of the

people. And at the sight of them these raised a cry, "We do not want the Council to rule her. Let her will be law, like the will of the old Czars."

Then Anne rose up, and said, "Was it then not the will of the people that I should put my name to these laws?"

And they all cried out, "No, no." Then Anne turned to the nobles of the High Council, and said, "You have deceived me."

And she did not let them forget that they had cheated her. Slowly and cunningly she made them suffer for it, one by one. She banished some, and tortured some, and some she put to death. And so their plan was ruined, and their attempt foiled.

But though the Russians had feared lest they should have eight Czars, their one Empress, Anne, brought in an evil rule. She was cruel and coarse, and it was in her days that the Germans came into power and taught the Russians their bad habits.

Anne chose a German called Biren for her friend. He was a coarse and vulgar man, and drank and swore. With him came other Germans like himself. So they ruled the land, and they forbade the Russians to print certain books, and banished and tortured and taxed them, till only Russians would have borne it.

Often when the poor peasants were working in

the fields, the soldiers would come in and drive off their cows and sheep to pay the taxes. And the peasants went home in bitter sorrow to the hungry children, who could get no milk. Sometimes the peasants themselves were taken off to be soldiers. For there were two wars going on, one in Turkey and one in Poland. The war in Turkey was a terrible war, for the Russians lost many provinces. The soldiers had long marches without food or water, and many died from sickness.

You must not forget that Peter the Great had also taken many peasants to be soldiers, and that the people were taxed for the wars he made. But he did also many good things for them: he taught them shipbuilding, and good ways of trade, and made them friends with Europe. Anne did none of this. She only taught the nobles to look at vulgar German plays, and to spend much money on dress, and to drink themselves drunk every night.

She enjoyed making game of the Russian nobles. Once she made them gulp down balls of pastry, and crouch like hens sitting on eggs to amuse the Court. She forced them all to dress in hideously bright colours,—green and blue, and yellow and purple. She built a theatre, but the only plays she had acted in it were plays in which there was a great deal of hitting with a stick, like clowns in a panto-



mime. And though that may be amusing for a little, it is not all one would wish to see.

Gradually the Russian nobles grew to hate Anne and her German friends more and more. And they said to one another, "We will do all we can to get rid of these Germans and their ways and manners."

Anne reigned for ten years, and all through her reign the people grew more and more discontented. There were famines and bad harvests, and the people said, "That is because a woman is reigning." And some said, "Remember the proverb, Cities governed by women do not last: walls built by women never grow high."

But before the discontented people arose to fight Anne died. When she lay dying, she said to Biren, "My great-nephew, the baby Ivan, is to be Czar when he is old enough, and you are to rule for him till then. Fear nothing."

But Biren had sharper eyes than Anne; and he saw that there was much to fear. He saw the dark looks of the nobles as they muttered to one another, "Shall a German rule us?" And the father and mother of the baby Ivan said, "It is we who ought to rule in our son's name." So it came to pass that one night when Biren was asleep, soldiers came into his room and dragged him off to prison. Soon after he was sent to Siberia.

Then the father and mother of the baby Emperor

were left to rule for him. But they quarrelled so much that they could decide upon nothing, and left all the nobles to do as they liked. The little Czar's mother, who was also called Anne, was so lazy that she would not dress herself, but lay on a sofa all day with a handkerchief over her face. No one was much grieved at that, for she was of as much use on a sofa as anywhere else.

One person was very glad that Anne was so lazy. This was a woman of whom we have already spoken.

She was the daughter of Peter the Great, that aunt of poor little Peter II. who complained to him that she had no money. She was now twenty-eight years old, and tall and pretty, and very clever. She was merry and active, and loved riding and rowing. Anne was too lazy ever to go out-of-doors, so Elizabeth went alone in her sledge. And as she went she would speak to the soldiers about the streets, or go to their houses and drink whisky with them. Often she stood godmother to their children.

By degrees they became so friendly with her that they would even climb up on the back of her sledge and whisper in her ear. They were not her only friends. She made friends with the French and the Swedish ambassadors. Then gradually the soldiers said to one another, "Why should not Elizabeth be our Empress?" Then very quietly they and Elizabeth made their plans.

So one cold October night in 1741, when it was quite dark, Elizabeth slipped quietly out of the palace and went with three friends to the place where the guards lived. "My children," she said to them, "you know that I am the daughter of Peter the Great." Then they answered, "Mother, we are ready; we will kill them all."

Then they marched across to the palace and took the gates by storm. And they laid hands on the baby Czar in his cradle, and on his mother and father, and lodged them safe in prison. Then next morning a great meeting of the people was called, and to them it was proclaimed, "Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, is Empress."

So Elizabeth reigned.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE GREAT ELIZABETH.

THIS was a great change. It was not one of the changes that mattered little.

The other changes had been simply as if one master after another had been teaching the nobles the same lesson. Now the lesson changed. The new mistress, Elizabeth, taught them something quite fresh.

For instead of teaching them to think as the Germans thought, she taught them to think as the French thought.

The Russians did not know at first what she was going to teach them. Only they were glad to get rid of the Germans. They preached sermons against them, and called them evil names. The first Russian who had his books printed, Lomonossof, wrote poems to Elizabeth, and said she was like Noah, because she had saved the Russians from a flood—of Germans—that would have destroyed them; and like Moses, because she had led them out of the



land where they were slaves—to the Germans. Lomonossof's verses were not very good, but you shall hear more about him presently, for he is worth remembering.

Then Elizabeth reigned. And she reigned well and wisely. She made her name great in Europe without very much loss of men or money.

First she took Finland, the land of granite rocks and icy pools, from the Swedes. At that the Russians rejoiced, for they had always wished to have Finland. Elizabeth did not leave it empty, but sent there Russian labourers and fishermen, so that they built houses, and lived there.

Then she gained glory in a very long war that was going on in Europe, the war of the Austrian Succession. For she sent an army to help Austria, just when peace was being made. So the army struck not a single blow, but marched back again to Russia, looking large and well ordered, with much blowing of trumpets and beating of drums. The people who watched it said, "How large and how fine the Russian army is! Russia must be a strong country."

But the war that really made a difference to Russia was a war between France and Prussia. Elizabeth decided to help France. So a Russian army marched into Prussia, and won a great victory. After that French nobles came constantly to St.

Petersburg, and Russian nobles went to Paris. And they learned more and more to think like the French.

That was an excellent thing, because the French were a very clever nation, and just now far advanced. Many books and plays, and poetry of all sorts, were being written. Besides that, they were the most highly civilised and well-mannered nation in Europe.

They taught the Russians many things. To begin at the smallest, they taught them to be clean. For Elizabeth sent for French inspectors, who went round from cottage to cottage, and taught the peasants to keep their sacred pictures clean. Better than that, they tried to teach them not to get drunk. Elizabeth made a law that every one who was drunk should be beaten with the knout.

In one way she was unwise. For she persecuted people because of their religion. In that she might have taken a lesson, even from the reign of Anne.

Elizabeth made the punishment of criminals much less severe than it had been before her time. She would not have any one put to death, and torture was very seldom used. But in this too, as in many reforms, she could not manage to be entirely obeyed. Often the executioners knouted the people so severely that they died. It was the French who taught Elizabeth to be gentle.

She did much to make the towns beautiful and well ordered. They had narrow, dirty streets, paved with wooden beams. At night there was very little lighting, and sometimes tame bears, belonging to the people in the town, prowled about and did much damage. Elizabeth began to change that.

Also the houses were small, and badly built and dirty. Elizabeth invited French artists and sculptors, and they built many better houses, and taught the people how to build them. In St. Petersburg Elizabeth had a winter palace built. Better than that, she encouraged trade, and founded banks for the first time.

But the best thing that the French taught the Russians was learning. Elizabeth built many schools and colleges. The most famous was the University of Moscow. It was a mean little place at first, but it grew great, and now many learned men are educated there. Elizabeth obliged the children to go to school, which was an excellent thing.

Best of all were the books that the French brought in,—books of essays and history, and plays and poetry. The Russians read them eagerly, until their own minds were full, and then their own ideas began to grow. It was like sowing seed in the ground. The seed falls in, and takes root and sprouts, and the plant in its turn

bears seed. So the Russians in their turn began to write books.

That brings us back to Lomonossov.

He was the son of a fisherman who lived upon an island in the Icy Sea near Archangel. When he was quite a little boy he used to go out fishing with his father, and spend days and weeks on the sea.

But he was so eager to learn, that whenever he was at home he used to go off to an old clerk of the church near, who taught him to read and write. When he had learned all the clerk could teach him he said, "How can I be a learned man?" At that the clerk shook his head and said, "To be a learned man you must know Latin. That can only be learned at three places, and Moscow is one."

Then Lomonossov made up his mind that to Moscow he would go. He read all the books he could get hold of—a Psalm-book, a Grammar, and an Arithmetic.

One day, when he was seventeen, his chance came. A long train of wagons full of fish was going to Moscow. "Here's my chance," thought Lomonossov. So he got into one of the wagons, and went to Moscow.

When he reached Moscow, without friends and money, he did not know what to do. But a clerk who knew him happened to see him, and by a great deal of trouble sent him to school.



Then he was happy. He learned so hard and so well, that after six years he was sent to Germany. By that time his school-fellows began to think much of him. At first they called him "the great booby who wanted to learn Latin."

In Germany he was often hungry, and without money. There he began to write poetry. It was not very good poetry, but it was the first time that a Russian had tried to write poetry according to rules. He was the first to teach the Russians a good metre. And he wrote a book of rules for writing poetry.

He did not live a good life, and often got into trouble. But little by little the Russians began to see how clever he was. At last he was made Secretary of State. And when he died many great men came to his funeral.

But his great and best deed was the encouragement he gave to the peasants to get learning. For they saw how great he was, and how small he had been. Not very long ago a Russian poet wrote this. It is supposed to be spoken to a peasant going to college :—

"Are you dirty and barefooted ?  
Are you cold and poorly clad ?  
Never mind, for such a journey  
Many famous men have made.

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You will learn how from Archangel  
Once a peasant lad there came,  
Who by God's will and his own will,  
Got him wisdom, got him fame."

There is not time to tell you of the many other Russian writers—of Soumarokof the dramatist, and Prince Kantemir, and Trediakovski, and the others. But when Elizabeth died in 1762 the greatest work she left behind her was the Revival of Russian Learning.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### COURT MANNERS.

I DARE say you have often felt as if fairies were real people—more real than many of the kings and queens and old men you read about. Yet you know that these existed, and you do not know that fairies exist. What is the reason that the fairies are more real to you than the real people?

I think the reason is that you have made a picture to yourself of the way the fairies live. You know the little things about their lives. You know about their wands, and how small they are, and how they drink dew, and dance, and can hide in flowers. So knowing those little things makes you feel as if fairies were real.

I want you very much to feel that these Russian kings and queens are real people. So I will tell you, as you have often been told of the fairies, where they lived, and how they amused themselves, and what they ate and drank.

First for the houses. Elizabeth built at Moscow

A palace called the Winter Palace. It was of stone and very handsome with rooms many and large. But all the other palaces were very small and mean and uncomfortable. They were of wood and the wood often grew rotten. So many mice and rats lived in these palaces that when there was a fire as often happened, hundreds of mice and mice came running down the stairs in the night.

With the Empress Elizabeth lived her nephews Peter and his wife Catharine. In winter we shall soon have a great deal. These had separate rooms from the Empress but they often dined with her. Each noble family who lived at Court had four or five rooms for themselves. Sometimes they dined alone, sometimes with each other, sometimes with the Empress.

The rooms were often hung inside with tapestry of different colours and rich cloths. For furniture there was first a stove, covered with painted tiles, and then beds, chests of drawers, and tables much like ours. The windows were badly fitted in, so that the rooms were draughty, and Catharine often caught cold.

This was how they spent the day. When they were in the country some got up very early. Catharine used to get up about three o'clock in the morning and dress like a man, and go out in a boat shooting wild ducks or hunting. Peter was always



an hour or two later, for he was very particular about getting his breakfast properly. Then at twelve o'clock they had dinner. They ate pretty much what we eat now, only it was badly cooked. Peter was very greedy, and once made himself ill on stewed oysters. After dinner they went to sleep for an hour or two, and after that listened to music, or saw plays, or played cards, or went to a masquerade ball, or drove out, or sledged, or walked, or rode. Side-saddles were just coming in, but Catharine rode like a man. Then came supper, and then bed.

These masquerade balls were very grand. The Empress had them about twice a week. She used often to make all the Court ladies dress up as men, while the men dressed like women. Elizabeth's everyday dress was very quiet—of grey and white.

The courtiers were very fond of going to the play. There was a band of French actors who lived at Court and acted about twice a week. They acted in a covered place that was used for a riding-school by day.

Some of the courtiers were learned, clever people, and these read a good deal, though almost entirely French books. They went to church often. The Empress had a beautiful choir of singing-boys. At certain times of the year there were great festivals, when, besides singing, they had sports of all sorts, and dancing, and many presents were given away.

But the most unfortunate thing that could happen to a courtier was to fall ill, for people knew very little about illness in those days. They could hardly pull a tooth out. Once when the Empress had a stroke, and lost the power of speech, they thought that she had fallen and bitten her tongue. And although, as I said, there were great draughts in the houses, the baby Emperor was almost stifled with heat. The room was very warm to begin with; then he was wrapped in flannel, and laid in a cradle lined with fox-furs. Over him was a counterpane of quilted satin, lined with wadding, and over that one of red velvet, lined with black fox-furs. Poor child! The manners of the Court, though they were much improved from Anne's time, were not good. Once a young courtier was very rude to Catharine, and so to take her revenge she and a maid-of-honour got several strong rods, and tied stinging nettles round them, and then went to his room and beat his hands and legs and face. Strange manners for the palace of a king!

In more important affairs the management was still very bad. Once the State Treasurer had to come to Catharine privately to borrow some money, because the Empress wanted some and he had none to give her. Think what people would say if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to borrow money secretly to pay for the Queen's dresses!

So the life of the Court went on, quite as real a life as your life now.

When Elizabeth was dead her nephew Peter was proclaimed Emperor, according to her will.

He was a foolish, almost idiotic man; but his wife Catharine was clever and keen beyond most people. He hated Catharine, and often wished that she was dead, and behaved cruelly to her. When he was angry he screeched like an eagle. He used to amuse himself by playing with a cardboard fortress and toy soldiers. Now and then he had an execution and a funeral.

When he became king he wished in all things to do the opposite to what Elizabeth had done. For he hated her because she had been strict with him. So he fetched Biren back from Siberia, and made friends with the King of Prussia, whose portrait he wore in his ring. Once he said, "If the King of Prussia bids me, I will make war on hell with all my army." That made the Russians very angry.

Catharine resolved to let things be so no longer. She had many friends, for she never lost her temper, and always remembered that every one might be of use to her. So one day when Peter was away she and her friends went down by night to where the guards were stationed. These agreed to support her, and they marched against Peter and took him. And

they said that he must swear never to be Emperor. He took the oath "as quietly as a child being sent to sleep." He had only been Czar a few months.

Then he was sent down to a country house with his violin and his toys. Four days after he was dead. Catharine said it was a cold that had gone to his brain.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### CATHARINE THE GREAT.

As soon as Catharine was safely sovereign of Russia, she called a mighty council.

She sent messages to the provinces to say that the nobles and the townspeople and the soldiers and the Crown peasants were to elect one man for each province. These men were all to meet at St. Petersburg, and there to talk about the laws and how they ought to be altered, and about all that ought to be done in the kingdom.

When the people heard it, they held their breath for wonder. For it seemed as if Russia were going to rule herself.

So these men all came up to St. Petersburg. Some were in grand dresses of many colours, some in dirty sheepskins. Some rode in carriages, others trudged on foot or went in jolting, jogging carts. There were six hundred and fifty-two of them.

Then Catharine met them in the great hall of the

palace. She gave them each a medal with a portrait of herself on it, and underneath the motto, "For the happiness of each and all."

Then she told them her will as to the manner of the changes they were to make. These were some of the things she said:—

"The nation is not made for the sovereign, but the sovereign for the nation. Liberty is the right to do all that is not forbidden by law."

The great assembly began to talk very eagerly, for they longed to work for the good of Russia. The merchants said, "Much should be done to rule the towns better and to increase our trade." The nobles said, "We have not our full rights." Best of all, many said, "The serfs ought to be made free."

They did not say that at once. One said, "The masters of serfs ought not to own them, but only to look after them." Then another answered him, "If that is done, then it only remains to set the serfs free."

That was a great question. Many essays were written about it. The best essay which held that the serfs should be freed was sent to Catharine.

But just at this moment war broke out with the Turks. Then the assembly could sit no longer, for the men were forced to be busy with the war.

Catharine thanked them all for their work, and

said, "You have given me hints for all the Empire. Now I know what I ought to do."

But the time for her doing it had not yet come. Catharine and three sovereigns after her were to die before that great work of freeing the serfs was done, before the great nation of the Russians was to be free from the blot of slavery.

Now for Catharine's wars.

Catharine's wars divide into two parts, according to the nations who were her friends at two different times. The first half of her reign she was friends with Prussia and England and Denmark. That was called the System of the North. Later on she was friends with Austria and France.

The war began in Poland. Catharine and the Russians were watching Poland as a cat watches a mouse, ready to spring the moment it tries to run away.

And Poland did try to run away from the power of Russia, and take for its king the Duke of Saxony. But just as a cat would put down its heavy paw as quick as lightning and catch the mouse, so Catharine sent an army into Poland, and made a Polish noble called Stanislas king. That is, she called him king. But when the Assembly or Diet of Poland met to make laws, she told them what laws to make, and sent her men with muskets to stand round the hall of meeting and see that they obeyed her.

Stanislas did not like that. He was a good and

clever man; he wished to do away with the Poles' bad government, and give freedom to the serfs, and let them make their own laws. But I do not think he could have succeeded, even if all the Poles had joined him, for besides greedy Russia, the Prussians too were watching to see what they could get.

Now perhaps you know what happened before you are told. How can that be? How do people sometimes know that there will be a great explosion, and a certain rock will split into pieces? Because they know that there is dynamite and a lighted match there. So they know what happens before it happened. Poland split into pieces like the rock.

The party who supported the Duke of Saxony collected in different places bands of soldiers, and came marching on one town after another. At that Stanislas asked the Russians to help him, and the Russian army came in, and war began.

Meanwhile the other countries in Europe made little plots to draw away the Russian army from Poland; for they were afraid that the Russians would take Poland altogether and grow too strong. Therefore they persuaded the Turks to attack Russia.

So a great Tartar band came galloping over the south of Russia, burning houses and killing the peasants. That was awkward for Russia when the army was engaged somewhere else.

But Catharine had the heart of a lion. She said



to her generals, "The Romans never minded how many enemies they had, they only asked where they were." So part of the Russian army marched down boldly to where the Turks were, and won a great victory. They were always glad to fight the Turks, who were really Tartars.

The war went on, and two years afterwards the Russian army took the Crimea, and burnt the Turkish fleet.

The Austrians did not like that news very well, for they were afraid that Russia would grow too strong. Also the provinces that Russia had taken were close to Austria.

Then the Prussians proposed a selfish and evil plan. That was, that Poland should be divided into three parts—Russia, Austria, and Prussia should each have a part.

Catharine was forced to agree to this plan, because if she had not consented, Prussia and Austria would both have declared war. And the Russians could not fight Poland and Turkey and Prussia and Austria all at once, whatever the Romans used to say about their enemies.

So in 1771 Poland was split into three pieces. That was called the First Partition of Poland.

That is the end of the first half of Catharine's reign.

Now for the Court and the life of the nobles.

Catharine was doing a great deal for it, just as her husband's aunt, Elizabeth, had done.

She set up schools for the children of the nobles and rich merchants, and said many clever things about education. There were foreign teachers in her schools, and French was thoroughly taught. That is a very important thing to remember.

In one way it was a bad thing, for it separated the nobles still more from the people. For the nobles talked French, and read French books, while the people could do neither.

But in another way it was very good. For the French were writing and speaking then to persuade people to treat every one well, because all were human beings. These books said that, just as a noble and a peasant had an equal number of eyes, ears, and legs, so they ought to have equal rights, and one ought not to rule over another.

It took a long time for these ideas to get far down into the Russians' minds. You are taught not to be selfish, but if you want anything very much you sometimes are selfish. That is because the idea of unselfishness has not got down to the bottom of your mind yet. It takes a long time for ideas to sink in, as it takes water a long time to soak into a clay soil.

Catharine was a very clever woman herself. She made friends with the Grimm who wrote

Grimm's fairy stories. Also she made friends, among others, with a clever French philosopher called Voltaire, who was full of these ideas about liberty.

Catharine loved to collect round her witty noblemen. She talked so cleverly to them that they were delighted. She wrote books also. One was called "The Grandmother's A B C." That was stories out of Russian history for her two little grandsons to read. Besides this she wrote plays, and a dictionary, and other little books.

But the life of the Russian people was going on very differently to this Court life. •

For in the year 1771 there was a terrible plague in Moscow. One after another the people fell ill and died, until a thousand died every day, and the dead bodies lay about the streets unburied.

Then the poor ignorant people, who were very superstitious, thought that the holy image of the Virgin might have mercy on them if they prayed to it. So they all crowded round it, pressing one upon another, wild with fright.

When the Archbishop saw this he wished to take away the image. For many were crushed to death in the press, and many who were just falling ill gave the plague to the people they touched.

When the people heard it they grew very angry. "The Archbishop does not believe in God," they

said. "Let us go to his palace, and ask him why he forbids us to pray to the Mother of God." Then they rushed to his palace, and broke open the doors, and seized the Archbishop and killed him.

When the news came to Catharine she sent a body of soldiers with musketry and cannon to break up and send away the crowd; and they did so. But they could not break up and send away the thoughts in Catharine's mind. For she saw that the vast Russian people were ignorant and strong.

That revolt was only like a few heavy raindrops before the storm; a great storm was gathering. For the Russian people were about to rise up with a leader of their own—they alone, with no nobles or priests to help them. That was the first time they did it, and they have never done it since.

Down in the south, above all, the people were miserable. They were mad with seeing the Turks burn their houses, and their children being taken away for soldiers. They began to say to each other, "Why should we be so miserable and our masters so happy? Why should we pay taxes and they go free?" And there was no answer to that "Why."

So gradually there began to collect together a great army. There were Cossacks with their horses, eager to fight and get free, and Raskolniks who were persecuted, and Turks that were discontented,



and hungry peasants with thin faces. What a crowd to see ! A whole people making an army !

And who led them ? They did not want to rush into the well-built houses where the nobles lived, and, each man for himself, to take the rich furniture and the good food and the money. They wanted to find some one who might have a right to be Czar. So the clever ones among them began to pretend that they were Peter III. and Ivan VI. ; and the peasants believed one after another, till at last arose a greater than all, and his name was Pougatchef the Cossack.

He had been for months and months in the dark prison of Kazan, dungeons with little light, dank and foul ; and then he had been sent across the Ural Mountains into the bitter wintry land of Siberia. And from there he had escaped, and he came back to Russia and said, " I am Peter III. ; follow me ! " And three hundred followed him.

So he raised his banner, and marched against a fortress, saying, " I am come to punish my wife and son." But he did not take the fortress. Why not ? Because the fortress needed no taking. For the soldiers inside, when they saw him coming, said, " This is Peter III. ; let us join him." So they took their officers and bound them, and unlocked the gates, and threw them wide open. And Pougatchef

marched in, and he hung the officers from the battlements, and joined the soldiers to his army. At that sight all the vast body of the peasants and Cossacks came to join him, and he marched on through Russia northwards to Moscow. And on his way all the fortresses yielded, and the peasants joined him, and the news was brought to Catharine as she sat in her palace at Moscow.

Then Catharine grew troubled and dismayed, for she feared that soon Pougatchef would be at Moscow. And she saw how the men of Moscow were beginning to say one to another, "Why should not we too rise and join Peter III.?" Then she sent an army in haste against Pougatchef; but the soldiers at the sight of him gave up their officers, and turned and followed him. So it happened many times. And Catharine's heart grew full of fears.

Then she called one of her great generals, Bibikoff, and sent him with soldiers against Pougatchef. And Bibikoff went with a bold face and brave words; but he said to his wife quietly, "It is not Pougatchef whom we have to fight, but the discontent of the Russian people. This evil is great and terrible; ah! all will go ill." Yet he met Pougatchef, and fought a fierce battle; and Pougatchef was beaten and his guns taken, and his men fled this way and that. Then, in the midst of victory, Bibikoff died.

But Bibikoff's officers gave chase to Pougatchef like wolves; and they tracked him down rivers and through forests. And Pougatchef fled in a lordly manner, for he took fortresses on his way, and hung their commanders. But the soldiers came after him, and he knew it.

And at last a great general joined Catharine's soldiers; his name was Souvorof, and we shall presently hear more of him. He was bold and quick, and daring and dogged. And he followed Pougatchef as if he would follow him for ever. And at last he caught him. And Pougatchef's arms were tied, and he was brought into Moscow, and then hung in the Red Place on a high gibbet, that all the people might see. Then, when their leader was dead, all the hungry, sorrowful men went back to their homes, and were miserable. That was in 1773.

But Catharine would no longer let the Cossacks live in camps; and she took the camps with her army. Many Cossacks ran away to different parts, and others entered Catharine's army. Then Catharine sent for Germans, and for other labourers; and these went to the grassy steppes, and dug the ground round it all into beautiful black-earthed fields, and built neat little villages where the old Cossacks had galloped about and lived in tents.

Yet Catharine's heart was sad for these discontented people. And though the nobles said, "It is

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impossible to free these ignorant peasants," and Catharine agreed, yet she wished honestly to give them better government and fair justice. There was a sad old Russian proverb that ran in her head, "We cannot seek justice from God, His dwelling is too high; nor from the Czar, for his dwelling is too far off."

So Catharine had courts of justice at many new places, that the place of justice might not be so far off. Only for the peasants owned by nobles there was no court at all. There were no laws for them. It was difficult even to prove by law that a noble might not kill his serfs.

Yet Catharine, like Peter I., wished to do everything for the good of the Russian nation. But it takes a very wise and keen mind to see always what the good of a nation is.

Catharine never persecuted any one for their religion. At the great meeting at the beginning of her reign there were Mohammedans and heretics, and people of all religions.

Catharine founded a large school for the serfs' children, and she also provided more doctors than there yet were in Russia. She herself was the first person in Russia to be vaccinated. She gave her cloak, her muff, and her pistols to the doctor who did it. He was an Englishman, and his family have them still; and I have seen them.



During the last half of Catharine's reign she was friends with Austria.

The war with Turkey went on. The Russians conquered the little three-cornered island of Crimea, with its high cliffs and fine trees and wonderful mines. That little three-cornered island has a long story.

After that the Russians made a plan about Turkey, which the Austrians also agreed to. This was the plan.

"It would be well," they said, "if, between Russia and Austria, there were a kingdom that belonged to neither, but that would not fight with either. Let us take away provinces of Turkey, and make a kingdom out of them. Perhaps we may even take Constantinople, and, in that case, all Turkey shall be one kingdom." Then the plan pleased them so much that they ended, "The first king shall be Constantine, the grandson of Catharine."

Little Constantine, who was quite a baby, was given a Greek nurse. All the ports on the Black Sea were filled with soldiers, and built round with strong walls. Sebastopol was built. You have heard that name.

More than that, a large arch was built, and on it written, "This is the way to Constantinople."

The Turks grew frightened before the Russians

had finished their preparations. Quite suddenly they declared war.

The Russians were surprised, but they marched out with the Austrians. A fierce war began; for this time the Turks were afraid that they were going to be driven out of Europe, so they fought their best.

But one morning, when Catharine woke early at St. Petersburg, she heard far off a low distant growl; and she knew it was the Swedish guns.

Now the Swedes were quite new enemies to Russia. For Sweden had been weak, and split up into parties, like Poland.

But just lately a new king, Gustavus, had come back from France, where he had been educated. He called the Senate together, and made them promise to obey the king. Besides this, he had said there was to be no more torture; and he had shut up the Cave of Roses. That was a horrible hole full of frogs and worms and slimy toads, where the criminals used to be put. That had pleased the Swedes so much, that they were eager to serve and obey him. So now they were marching under his banner to take Finland, the land of granite rocks.

Then there was great trouble; but Catharine collected armed peasants and sent them against the Swedes.

After a while the Sultan of Turkey begged for

peace. Catharine was only too glad to grant it, for her money and soldiers were going fast. So peace was made.

All this made the Russians love and honour Catharine more and more. For they hated the Turks.

And Poland? Poland was like a poor stag hunted down by dogs trying in vain to save itself.

Stanislas was doing his very best while Russia was busy with the Turks to make Poland free and happy. He built schools, and invited clever men to Poland, and tried to teach them common-sense and love of their country.

But one unlucky day he went a little too far. For he called a free meeting of the Poles, and arranged that Poland should be ruled by a senate of her own nobles and deputies from her own towns—that she might rule herself. And that news was brought to Catharine and the Prussians, and they were furiously angry, and each sent a great army into Poland, and they took possession of it.

Worse than that, she called a Diet, and as before set soldiers round the hall, and the Prussian general sat in a chair next the king with his hand on his sword. The members were to agree that Poland should be divided between Russia and Prussia. All the night they sat there silent, but in the morning, when their enemies would wait no longer, for fear

of worse they consented, and came out weeping into the streets. They made one attempt to win back freedom. For the peasants rose and armed themselves with scythes, and joined the nobles, and they fought bravely and fiercely against the Russians and Prussians—and Kosciusko led them, as you will read by and by in another book. But it was of no use. They were terribly beaten by the large armies of their enemies, and the Russians took Prague.

So ended the freedom of Poland. Yet a time was coming when they would fight the Russians again fiercely, and march even to the Holy City, Moscow.

This is almost the end of Catharine's reign. There were great troubles in France at this time—the time of the French Revolution. You know how the poor oppressed people rose to get liberty, and, in their ignorance, only got a worse bondage. You know how they beheaded thousands on the guillotine, and at last killed the king and queen.

Catharine was afraid, when she saw this, that the Russian peasants would do the same. So she would no longer allow books to be written on Liberty, nor let the Russians go into France. Also she opened the letters of Russians whom she had suspected.

But one day Catharine was found lying insensible in her room. That evening the news began and spread through Russia that the great Catharine was dead. This was in 1796.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

PAUL.

Now we shall hear how the Russians won themselves glory in the eyes of all Europe, though they lost much, and what happened to them once in dark snowy nights on the top of high mountains.

The new Czar of Russia thought a great deal of himself. One day he said to his minister, "Know that the only person of importance in Russia is the person I speak to, at the moment I am speaking to him." He was of a bad temper, too, and sour. His mother had made him obey her like a child, though he was forty-two years old; she would not even allow him to teach his own children. Besides this, he remembered well how his father had died suddenly; and, when he thought of it, he began to suspect dark things about his mother. So gradually he grew to hate her, and all she did, more and more; and when she died, and he became the Czar, he determined to act in all things contrary to what she would have willed.

And besides this, Paul had had a great trouble. He had loved dearly the wife whom he first married. But she died, and after her death he found out that she had not loved him really, but had only feigned love. And from that time he distrusted all his friends, and his temper grew sharp and bitter.

So he made foolish and despotic laws, and that made the nobles discontented. He forced their carriages to stand still when he passed, and he made all his subjects, both men and women, throw themselves on their knees in the snow and mud before him. He would allow very few books or plays to be published, and would not even allow European music to be brought to Russia. Neither would he let many foreigners travel and live there.

But the serfs and peasants were happy, and praised the good Czar. "Thank God," they said, "he no longer takes so many of our men to be soldiers."

While they were rejoicing Paul was writing to the kings of different countries, and saying to them that Russia had been engaged in ceaseless wars, and that he would now give his people the peace for which they sighed. And to France he wrote, and said that he wished to live at peace with her, and to stop the war that was wasting Europe.

Then he set himself to reform the army; but

though there was much to reform, he did not do it. For he only took his own advice, and that advice was poor. He put all the soldiers into Prussian costume, with pigtails and powdered heads, and shoe-buckles and gaiters, and heavy uncomfortable caps, instead of leaving them their own comfortable, useful dress. Souvorof, the old general, shook his head one unlucky day, and said, "There are powders and powders! Shoe-buckles are not gun-carriages, nor pigtails exactly bayonets. We are not Prussians, but Russians." When Paul heard that he was so enraged that he sent Souvorof away to a little country village. Souvorof was very happy there, and he rode a cock-horse with the little village children, and on Sundays and Saints'-days he rang the church bell for service, and then read the Epistle, and gave the choir singing-lessons. He knew well enough that when Russia wanted him he would be fetched back again; and so it turned out.

Now Paul, above all things, hated the French Revolutionists and Napoleon Buonaparte. He did not mean to go to war with him until he was obliged, but that time was not far off.

For Buonaparte was gradually coming nearer and nearer Russia; and in one French harbour a fleet was being quietly built, and very quickly. When Paul heard of that he feared that the Black Sea

would be attacked. Day by day his fears grew and grew, and at last he agreed to join the other European nations against France. So he sent his fleet to the Turkish and English fleets, another great body of Russians to Holland, and a great army to fight in Switzerland. When these great wars were decided on, there was one man whom Paul needed. So he had to put his pride in his pocket, and write to Souvorof to ask him to come back as commander. "You, Souvorof," he said in his letter, "you have no need of glory, but Russia has need of you." Souvorof left his village, and came back, feeling very proud and full of confidence, and he was sent at the head of the largest number of troops to Switzerland to join the Austrians.

The Austrian general met Souvorof, and asked him what his orders were, as to where he was to march, and what he was to do. "These are my plans," said Souvorof, and showed him a blank paper signed by the Czar. And he would say no more except, "I am marching on Paris; when I am there I shall restore the throne and the altar."

Then when he rode in front of the long lines of Russian soldiers, he gave them their orders, saying, "A sudden glance, rapidity, impetuosity. The van of the army is not to wait for the rear. Musket-balls are fools; bayonets do the business."

Then bloody battles were fought by the Russians



and their allies against the French in all parts. Some day you may read of all these yourself. Now I want to tell you of the great march of the Russians.

Souvorof had gone with his army into Italy, and there he had won glorious battles, and besieged great towns. Another Russian general was in Switzerland, and he heard that Napoleon was coming down on him, and it was arranged that Souvorof should lead his army across the Alps to join them.

So, on the 21st of September, Souvorof set out. He had first to mount the St. Gothard Pass, which you may have heard of. So his men toiled up there very slowly, because the Austrians had forgotten to order enough mules to carry up the baggage. At last they got to the top.

Then they went on slowly, through cold mist and fogs and clouds that hid the way. And below them were precipices that went down straight hundreds of feet below, like graves waiting for them, and the noise of torrents was in their ears, and above them were great masses of rock and ice that sometimes broke off and came falling down upon them. Still they went on, led by the splendid old Souvorof. On they went, hoping that they would join the Austrians and all would be well. And they little thought that some of the Austrians had been con-

quered, and others had fled, and there was no help for them.

And gradually round them the French gathered in, and they held the road before and behind, and on each side. And when Souvorof reached a little town among the mountains, he heard that the Austrians were conquered, and he knew he was caught in a trap.

But his courage never gave way. And he turned fiercely against one band of the French, and forced his way through them, while another troop kept off the rest. And at last, with few men, battered and beaten and worn-out, he reached a place of safety. And when men heard it, they cried, "Souvorof's retreat is better than a victory."

The Emperor Paul, as you may imagine, was very angry with the Austrians, and he wrote to them fiercely, and demanded compensation. The Austrian Emperor said he was much grieved, and tried to make matters straight again; but just at that moment unlucky news came to Paul. He was told that, at the siege of a certain town, the Austrians had made active peace with the French, and would not allow the Russian flag to stand on the battlements of the city.

Then Paul grew so angry, for he thought he was being despised, that he broke off his alliance with Austria. Soon after he quarrelled with England,

and then a new and a dangerous friend began to come in.

This was Buonaparte himself. With his clever keen eyes he had been watching Paul's doings, and he was determined to make friends with him. So he flattered Paul, and sent back all the Russian prisoners without exchange and in new uniforms, and he offered to do a great deal that Paul would like.

So gradually he got himself into favour, and presently the Russian nobles were astonished by seeing pictures of Buonaparte hung on the palace walls, and hearing Paul call out his health to be drunk at table.

But Buonaparte had only made friends with Paul because he wanted to use him, and so presently he proposed a great scheme to Paul, and it is lucky for us English that the scheme was not carried out.

One morning the Ataman of the Cossacks of the Don received a letter from the Emperor Paul, and this was what he said: "The English are going to attack me, but I must be beforehand with them. It is only four months' march to India; and thither you and your army must go. All the treasures of the Indies shall be yours, and great glory and honour."

The Ataman was, as you may think, much surprised at this news; but he assembled his Cossacks,

and they began to march. On their way they had to cross the Volga, and the crossing was very dangerous, for the winter was over, and the whole river was full of solid masses of ice drifting to and fro.

However, they tried to cross it, and the first regiments had just reached the further bank when news came to the army that the Czar Paul was dead.

The plan was all over. The Cossacks went back home. Buonaparte was in a storm of rage and hate against England, which he now hardly hoped to conquer; and he said with bitter curses that Paul had been murdered. So the time was over when France and Russia were united.

Was he murdered? Some say so, by five nobles secretly at night. Anyhow, he died after a reign of five years.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### WARS AND GLORY.

WHEN Alexander, Paul's son, made his first public appearance as Czar, the Russians rejoiced to see him, and hailed him gladly. He was tall and very majestic, and with a noble, sweet face; and his manners were gracious and winning beyond most men. And his mind was clever and eager, for he had been taught and trained by the wise Catharine; and his heart was full of ready sympathy and a generous will to make his nation happy.

All the way from St. Petersburg, on a journey that he took later, the road was lined with men eager to see the Czar. One captain pressed forward crying out, "Make way, make way; I must see this prince of peace."

So his reign began gloriously with freedom and peace. For he took off the bands of laws and rules, and let the Russians free. Again, he said they might travel in foreign lands, and read what books they liked. And he took away the punishment by

torture, and the secret court that Paul had established. And all the Russians said, "Now freedom has come back to the land ; this is indeed a prince of peace."

So for a little matters went smoothly and well. But it could not be so for ever. For anything that is a great task is a difficult task ; and to set a nation free cannot be done at ease. For the Russians were like children that had been sitting for long in a dark room without air. It was not only that the door must be unlocked, that the children might walk out ; but they had to be gently lifted up, and their cramped limbs taught to walk, and their eyes used to the sunshine and the brightness.

So difficulties came. Alexander might say that all should be judged justly, peasants and rich alike ; but the judges had long learned to be dishonest, and to take bribes, and give unjust judgments, and Alexander's word did not make them fair and just at once.

In Moscow there lived a clever, shabby man, in small rooms, up many flights of stairs ; and the room was untidy, with crumbs strewed about for birds, and he himself wore a ragged dressing-gown. But yet, for all that, his mind was clever and keen. He watched Alexander's work, and then he wrote this fable :—

“The Sheep could not live in peace because of the Wolves, till at last the rulers of the beasts interfered to save the victims. So they called a council, of whom more than half were Wolves. And why not?—for there have been Wolves who have walked quite quietly past a flock—when they have eaten enough. They met in a thick wood, and at last they made this law: ‘As soon as a Wolf shall disturb a flock, and begin to worry a Sheep, then the Sheep shall be allowed, without respect of persons, to seize it by the scruff of the neck, and carry it before the court to be judged.’ But,” said Kriloff at the end, “though the law is all that could be wished, yet I have noticed that, in spite of it all, the Wolf is sure to carry off the Sheep.”

Poor Sheep! Poor Russian peasants, in spite of Alexander’s good laws!

And Alexander’s great plan of making the serfs free was a plan which could not be made and carried out between a morning and an evening. And when Alexander saw difficulties growing and gathering, he began to be a little discouraged. And at the same time he began to long to make a great figure in Europe, in the wars that were going on, and to think more of the glory of Russia among European countries than of her happiness.

And so, like many other people, he grew a little tired of his plans; for, though Catharine, his grand-

mother, had taught him many things, she had not taught him to be as patient and as firm and as steady as she was herself. And Alexander and his young friends, who were like himself, began to fall into a habit of talking over their plans and doing no more. And though they often said to each other, "Russia is a land of slaves, and this should not be," they did nothing to free the slaves.

At one time it seemed as if Alexander might wake again. For a young noble called Speranski came to Court, who was bright and eager, and full of a steady purpose. He set to work to carry out plans for the freedom of Russia. But it was all of no use. The Wolves of course disliked him; and the poor Sheep themselves thought he meant them evil instead of good. So it happened that he was sent away to Siberia, and his work for Russia was over.

But we must hear about these wonderful European wars which took Alexander's mind away from his people; and these were the

#### NAPOLEONIC WARS.

It was a fierce time of war for the Russian people. Every bit of it is interesting. Some day you will read all the heroism and the gallant deeds. Now I can only tell you it very shortly.

The peace, as you may think, did not last long, for



Alexander hated the French nearly as much as Paul had loved them.

The same day that Napoleon was made Emperor, Russia declared war with France. It was a noble war, to help Europe to its rights. Alexander had many friends on his side. There were Sweden and England, and Prussia and Austria. Part of Alexander's army went with the three first. Alexander himself and his young officers took more to join the Austrians at Olmütz.

There was a splendid company of famous men : Koutouzof, the mighty general ; Miloradovitch, of whom men said, "Whoever follows him must have a spare life;" and Bagration, who was known for dogged bravery. On the night before the battle there was rejoicing and great hope. "It seemed to us," said one of the officers, "that we were going straight to Paris."

But under the dark sky, on the tops of the opposite hills, lay the vast hosts of Napoleon. They too had their famous men, and the great Emperor was there himself. Between the armies was a deep valley full of lakes.

This was the plan of the allied armies. Koutouzof and some Russians were to march down and attack the right wing of Napoleon's army. The dogged Bagration was to keep back the left wing. The Imperial guards were to stay on the heights.

When the sun rose he only lit up the mountain-top with his rays. Down below in the valley the clouds lay heavy and white.

Napoleon watched Koutouzof and Bagration go down on each side with their men till the clouds hid them from his sight. And his clever brain understood their plan.

So as soon as they had gone, he said to his soldiers, "March down, and scale the opposite hill." The charge sounded, and the French rushed down. Presently the Russians were horror-struck to see French uniforms come climbing out of the fog.

Then there was a fierce fight; but the Russians could not stand against them. Alexander had to turn and gallop off; the French had won the day.

Down below in the valley there were shouts of distress from the Russians. For the French, victorious, had marched down upon them. They found the Russians lost and bewildered among the lakes. Some were shot down by French guns, others drowned. Only Bagration retreated.

So ended the great battle.

Then Alexander and the Russians made peace, and went home disheartened. Their army was destroyed, and they had failed utterly, and they had not delivered Europe.

But it was not to be the end of their struggle. Alexander again called the Russians to war. This

time they were to fight in the land of Poland, that old enemy. The Russian and Prussian armies alone were to meet Napoleon, for Austria was crushed.

So at last the Russian army met the French in the town of Eylau. The snow was falling heavily, so thick that it hid the foes, and a terrible battle was fought. Part of the Russian army lost their way in a snow-storm, and when the veil of snow lifted they were right in front of the yawning cannons of the French.

But they fought on bravely, thinking only of the glory of Russia and the freedom of Europe. But at last a shout told the front ranks that a French troop was marching round to their rear.

Then they feared that they would be surrounded, and in the darkness of the night they retreated.

But it was a horrible sight that the sun shone upon next morning,—the white snow all covered with heaps of corpses and pools of blood, so that even Napoleon was sickened at the sight. His army was so much broken that he too fought no more battles for a time, but he was not idle.

The Russians asked for help from Europe. Some countries would not, others could not give it. So Russia went on alone for a time.

But soon her hopes were crushed. For the Russian general got penned in by the French in a narrow angle of a river. Napoleon was delighted

when he saw it, and he said, "It is not often one catches the enemy in such a fault."

And they suffered for their fault, for the army was mowed down like corn before the scythe, and only a few broken fragments came straggling back to Russia.

Then Alexander met Napoleon on the banks of the river, that they might agree together as to what was to be done, and as to whether Alexander could still help Prussia. So they met—the great Emperor of Russia and the conqueror of Europe—in a boat on the river. And there they talked for two hours together; and all the time they were talking, the King of Prussia on the bank pushed his horse with eagerness into the stream, so eager was he to hear what he might not hear.

But at last the talk was over. And it was agreed that Alexander was to help Prussia no longer, but was to help Napoleon; and that a Grand Duchy of Warsaw was to be founded in Poland. That was the end of the first war with Napoleon.

When the Russians heard that, they were furious, for they said that it was a treacherous and cowardly deed to give up Prussia to her enemies, and they cried aloud that the days of glory for Russia were past. But the peace that the Russians felt so shameful did not last long. Meanwhile Russia had many wars with England and Sweden and



Turkey. The war with Turkey was to take from her certain provinces; the others to help Napoleon, that he might fight in Spain, while Russia kept Europe quiet.

Russia took away Finland from Sweden, at the cost of great suffering to the Swedes. But now the Russians were so displeased with the peace that they cared nothing for it. "Poor Swedes! poor Swedes!" was all that they said.

Two things were working ill-will between Russia and France.

The first was Poland. Napoleon had made what he called the Duchy of Warsaw a kingdom of his own by itself. He made the serfs' and nobles' children go to school together, and in all things taught them equality.

One day the commander of the Warsaw army called himself "Commander of the Polish army."

"There is no Polish army," said the Russian commander. "The Emperor of the French may call his troops what he likes," answered the other.

Then the Russians saw plainly that their old foe Poland was growing strong again.

Another thing was that the trade of the two countries was suffering. Russia could no more buy and sell with England, for they were at war. That raised great discontent throughout the land of Russia.

Also Alexander did not want the Russian money to go out of the country. So he forbade the Russians to buy French silk or china; and if any one brought these things in they were burnt. That made Napoleon so angry that he said, "I would rather have had a slap in the face."

Just at this time Alexander sent away Speranski, who loved Napoleon's laws. Then, seeing Napoleon was getting angry, he collected the Russian army.

There was talk and treating for a time, but at last Alexander said to them, "Rise, all of you! With the cross in your hearts and arms in your hands, no human force can prevail against you." And the Russians arose rejoicing, and marched out.

But it was a vast army that was coming against them—as if a whole continent was sweeping down upon them. There were Germans and Spaniards, and Italians and French, and at the head old clever generals, who knew war well. The Russians call it still "The army of twenty nations."

But Alexander, fearing nothing, with his soldiers and Cossacks and armed peasants, settled down near the Dwina to wait for the Grand Army. Round them they built earth ramparts.

Then Napoleon came marching forward. At Wilna he stopped for four days, and then the Poles met him, dressed in white, red, and violet ribbons,

the Polish colours. For they thought that the day of their revenge had come.

Then Napoleon began his great march into Russia. But as he came on, his heart began to sink. For the roads were bad, and the army was too large to be well managed. Also he could not come up with the Russian army. For, as he marched forward, the Russians fell back. And, as they fell back, they burnt the villages on their way; so that, when the Grand Army came there, they found no food or shelter—only smoking ruins.

Napoleon began to be still more uneasy. And the Russian army, too, was growing discontented, and longing to fight. Alexander wisely sent Koutouzoﬀ, the old general, to take the command. "Koutouzoﬀ is coming to beat the French," said the soldiers to each other. And wily Koutouzoﬀ said to them, "Who, with such soldiers, would think of beating a retreat?"

At that they took heart, and, though they went on retreating, they felt that they were marching against the French. And at last they paused, and faced round at Koutouzoﬀ's orders, and fought a battle against the French; and it was a bloody battle, long and terrible. And at the end, all that even a Pole could say was, "Napoleon has succeeded; but at what a price!"

Then Koutouzoﬀ and his army retreated slowly

till they stood on the hills from which they could see the white walls and coloured domes of Moscow ; and there he called a council, and said to them, "What can we do ? If we stay here to defend our holy city Moscow, the French will destroy us altogether, and the land is lost. But can we leave Moscow to be destroyed ?" Then one general said one thing, and one another, but none could agree ; and at last Koutouzof said, "Here my head, be it good or bad, must decide for itself." And then he sent the order, "The army is to retreat through Moscow." But he himself did not retreat through Moscow, for he could not bear to enter the city, and he went round the walls weeping.

Then, inside the city itself, at the sight of the retreating army, there was tumult and questioning. And the clever governor of Moscow, Rostopchine, persuaded the people, first, that Napoleon was a rogue and a cut-throat, and that though he promised the serfs freedom he would give them death, and then that they had better leave Moscow to assemble together, and arm themselves outside. So many left Moscow, and the city was half empty when Napoleon reached the hills where Koutouzof had been, and the Grand Army marched in.

So in the cold September of 1812 Napoleon marched up the Red Staircase, where the Czars had stood, and into the palace of the Czars ; and the French Emperor was in Moscow.



But it was not to be so for long. First a fierce fire broke out in the city. Who lit it, no one can quite tell. The houses became blackened and ruined, and the Kremlin itself was almost burnt.

For thirty days they stayed at Moscow. But all the thirty days the men died off by hundreds. There was no food anywhere, and the starving men began to eat their horses.

Napoleon had hoped that the serfs would rise and join him. But instead of that they joined in small but fierce bands, and prowled round the houses. When they met a French soldier they killed him. Napoleon's hope was leaving him. There was only one way to go.

So at last he gave the order to retreat out of Moscow. Before they went they laid mines under the Kremlin. As the last stragglers of the Grand Army passed out of Moscow there was an explosion, and the Tower of Ivan the Terrible tottered and fell, and many gaps were made in the walls of the Kremlin. That was a barbarous, foolish insult.

The Grand Army went marching slowly homewards. It was colder than ever, and the starved and naked men died by hundreds.

Meanwhile the Russians, full of hope and joy, hung about the rear of their enemies; and now and then there was a skirmish, and once a French flag was taken and brought to Koutouzof. And at that

Koutouzof threw his cap into the air and cried, "Hurrah! hurrah for the brave Russian soldier!" And then he told them a little fable of Kriloff's, how a Wolf once got into a kennel and tormented the Dogs. But when he wanted to get out again the Dogs drove him into a corner, and kept him there. The Wolf said, "What is the matter, my friends? I came to see what you were doing, and now I am going away again." But up came the huntsman, and said, "No, friend Wolf; you are an old rascal with grey hair, but I am also grey and as clever as you." [And at that Koutouzof lifted his cap and showed his grey hair.] "No, Wolf," he said, "you shall not go as you have come, for I have set my Dogs upon you."

At last the Grand Army reached Wilna, where they had been before so glorious and so triumphant. There they rushed starving into the houses for food.

But the sound of cannon was heard. The Russians were upon them.

Then hastily, with fear, the Grand Army fled. But they left behind them thousands of sick and wounded. A terrible fate happened to those; for the Jews in the town, fearing both French and Russians, threw these poor men out of the window, or kicked them to death. When the Cossacks marched in they too were thirsty for revenge, and they massacred the sick and wounded, till the streets flowed with blood.

That night, after the slaughter, thirty thousand corpses were burnt on piles of wood.

So ended the march of the Grand Army.

But one defeat does not bring peace. So Alexander found. He was furious at the burning of Moscow, and he resolved to make peace with Prussia, and fight against Napoleon again.

Then war began again. Once there was a treating for peace, but nothing came of it. After that Austria joined Russia and Prussia and Sweden, and they called themselves the Coalition.

The Russian soldiers were full of desire to win. At one battle even the drummer-boys asked for muskets that they might fight. That was the first battle that the Coalition won. Alexander rejoiced, and gave medals to all the soldiers.

But the day was coming near when France and the Coalition should settle who should rule in Germany. The armies met Napoleon himself at the head of his host. Then was fought the Battle of the Nations, and the nations were victorious against the single conqueror.

And Napoleon, the great Emperor, retreated across the Rhine.

Then the Russian troops wondered where they would go next. They longed to march into France itself, as Napoleon had marched into Russia.

So they waited for days while Alexander and the others debated it. At length Alexander put out this declaration—

“Your heroism has led you to the banks of the Rhine; it shall lead you still further; you shall cross the Rhine.”

So they crossed the Rhine, feeling that they were freeing Europe. “For,” said Alexander, “the glory of Russia is to hurl her armed foe to the ground, but to load with kindness her disarmed enemy and the peaceful people.”

They had one check on the way. For the army split into two parts to go different ways to Paris. Napoleon took advantage of that, and attacked first one and then the other. Then, for a time, they paused and treated for peace. But nothing came of it, and they marched on again. At length, after a fierce battle, the people of Paris agreed to depose Napoleon; and Napoleon was forced to resign, and was Emperor of the French no longer. Then the Allies sent him away to the island of Elba.

Then there was a meeting of all the European Powers at Vienna. For it was necessary to make a great redivision of Europe, as if it was fresh land freshly conquered. It was as if a rude hand had rubbed out all the dividing lines in a map, and the thing had to be done again from the very beginning.



At first there was great disturbance and quarrelling, but suddenly news came that made them agree to deal quickly with the question. For Napoleon had escaped from Elba.

Then in haste they settled. All that concerned Russia was that she was again to have a third part of Poland. Then Alexander and the Allies prepared their armies. But just as they were about to march on Paris, news came of the Battle of Waterloo and the taking of Napoleon.

Still Alexander marched to Paris. There he found Blücher, the Prussian general, oppressing the citizens, and treating it like a conquered city. Alexander put this right, with the help of our Duke of Wellington. Next came the great question of the government of France. It was clear that the Bourbons were too weak to rule.

Then there was great grasping and quarrelling among the nations. Russia alone was noble, and asked least of all. England was the next most generous.

At last it was settled. The Coalition was to govern France for three years to establish the Bourbon family. France was to pay a tribute to be divided among the Powers.

After that Alexander left Paris for Russia. On his way back he settled Polish affairs. Here too he behaved nobly. He told them to form their

Assembly, and gave them his brother to be their head. And he said to them, "Gather around your banners to defend your country. The Emperor has seen already your courage in war."

They were to have a senate again of bishops, magistrates, and town deputies. Then Alexander went back, having done a great and unselfish work.

Alexander had made himself glorious in Europe; but he himself was changing, and becoming less noble day by day. For on all sides round him the nations of Europe that had suffered slavery arose and cried out, "Give us freedom." And though Alexander's mind taught him that they were right to cry out, yet he feared that the Russians too might rise, and he did not feel that he could guide them rightly.

And beyond this, he had a minister at home, named Araktcheef, who tried to teach him that tyranny was the best law. He forbade the Russians to write what they liked, and he would not allow science to be taught, because he said it contradicted the Bible. And he sent away the foreign tutors and teachers, and would not allow the Russians to go and learn in Europe.

And he did another thing that made the peasants angry. For he arranged that the soldiers were to live about in the different villages, and to help the peasants when war was not going on. And in

return for that the peasants were to support the soldiers' families during time of war. That pleased no one, for the soldiers did not like double work, and the peasants did not like working for the soldiers.

By degrees the Russians grew more and more discontented. And they began to make plans and to form secret societies of their own. And the aim of these societies was to make serfs free, that the Russians might rule themselves, and that the Czar's word might not be their law. And one Society wrote a book, called the *Catechism of the Free Man*, and a code of laws. And these were bound up into a book, in a green cover; and from that the Society was called the Society of the Green Book.

Some of the men who belonged to this were clever and good men. They had travelled to Paris and heard all about liberty; so when they came back to Russia, and saw the Russian serfs treated like slaves, their hearts burned within them, and they said, "This ought not to be so." And one said, "When I think how God has given the Russian people such splendid qualities—a rich and strong language, and a character that is tender and clever, and quick to forgive—and I think that perhaps this splendid nation may die without bearing any fruit, then my heart nearly breaks."

But all this time Alexander was growing more

timid, and more afraid of true liberty. And one day he did an act which shamed all the Russian people, and awoke them to cry out against him.

In Turkey the Bulgarians were being oppressed more and more. And at last they rose and cried for freedom, and looked to Alexander for help. And Alexander would not give it. No; he looked on while the Christians were ill-treated and tortured and slain. And he would give no help, though the voice of his nation cried out against him.

Then great evils came upon Russia. There were famines and a fire, and a terrible flood at St. Petersburg, when the waves of the sea came dashing over the land, and carried off wooden houses whole, with men in them, and whirled carriages and horses away in its flood, and carried a ship of the line into the great market-place, where it rested. And the Russians that heard of it said, in awe-struck voices, under their breath, "The wrath of God has come upon us; for our Czar has let the innocent suffer, and not raised a hand to help them."

And Alexander himself? He was growing sad and sadder day by day. And he sat alone for long hours, and thought of his great plans for Russia, and how the land was full of rebellion and discontent, and evil ruling. And his heart grew sick



within him at the thought. And, as a last blow, he heard that there was a society of men who had sworn together to kill him. And that knowledge was the bitterest he had to bear. For he had meant to do so much for Russia.

Soon he fell ill. And even as he tossed about in fever he kept crying out words of unrest and misery. So he died in the year 1825.

Yet the Russians did not forget how he had made their name glorious in Europe.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE IRON EMPEROR.

WHEN next you go out in the budding-time, look carefully at one of the buds on a tree or a flower. There it is, with its green sheath closely folded round it. But inside, the leaves are growing, little by little, unfolding and pushing against the sheath. Presently there will come a crack in it, then bit by bit the flower's leaves will shoot out and the sheath fall off.

That is like Russia. The people are closed up tight, and working to be free, gradually going towards it. You would never think of putting your hand over the sheath to keep it on when the leaves were trying to break it off. But the Emperor we are coming to now put his strong hand over Russia and kept her down. So he hurt the people, as you would bruise the tender, growing leaves. And it was of no use. Soon after his hand was cold and dead, and could hold the sheath on no longer, the leaves burst out—Russia became free.

His name was Nicholas. And at the very begin-

ning of his reign he might have seen how the people were longing to be free.

For this happened. Nicholas had an elder brother, Constantine, who of right would have come to the throne. But Constantine some years before had wished to marry a Polish Countess. And because he was a king he could not do this without giving up his right to the throne. So he gave it up, but only Alexander knew it.

Therefore when Alexander died, Nicholas took the oath to Constantine, and made his soldiers do so. At the same time Constantine took the oath to Nicholas. Then for a whole month there was confusion about these oaths.

Then the Society of the Green Book, who were waiting eagerly, said to one another, "Now is our time; we will raise our men, and get freedom for Russia."

Then they said to the soldiers, "Nicholas is lying; Constantine is the rightful king. Follow us, and we will gain for you the rightful Czar, and freedom and a Constitution."

Then the soldiers, who were ever ready to rebel, followed them to Moscow. And they marched before the palace, and cried out loudly, "Long live Constantine!" And their leaders shouted, "Long live the Constitution!" and the soldiers took up that cry also. But they were so ignorant that they did not

know what Constitution meant. So when one asked the other, "What is Constitution?" he answered, "Oh, that is the wife of Constantine."

When Nicholas heard the shouting of the soldiers, and the cries of the mob round them, he came out, straight as a rod, in his uniform, with his closed stern lips, to speak to them. But they would not hear him. And when the old general Miloradovitch spoke to them, they shot him dead.

Then Nicholas, seeing that gentle words were no use, bade his men to fire on the crowd. At that the ignorant peasants were terrified, and fled all ways. Nicholas went back into the palace, and as he went he said to one of his men, "That is a sad beginning for a reign."

Next day the leaders were brought up for trial. Nicholas was not unmerciful. Five of them only were hung. But as these were led out to suffer death, they said, "We die gladly for our country." And when the people heard that they thought in their minds, "These men have dared to die for liberty;" and they thought liberty was something worth the having.

Then Nicholas the Czar ruled, and he ruled with an iron hand. He wished truly to govern Russia well, but he thought that to govern well was to govern sternly, and lay burdens of rules and laws upon the people. He thought that his will



was to be law, whether it was unreasonable or not, and that the people had no right to be his judges.

So he drew out a new code of laws—laws after his own heart. He spent his time travelling to and fro about the country to do justice and hear causes. For he would not let the people speak through books, and tell him their wants. He was to settle what they wanted, and he was to supply their wants. He was to be like the nurse to a baby—not to give it all it cried for, for it was very likely wrong. But Nicholas forgot that the Russians were not babies, but grown men, and that they were wiser than he was, for they saw that they wanted freedom. Nicholas said, "Such rebellious people would make a wrong use of freedom." But a voice was soon to say, "Slavery never taught men how to be free," and to that Nicholas had no answer.

When Nicholas was asked to settle where the first railway was to be in Russia, he took a straight ruler and ruled a line from St. Petersburg to Moscow. That was foolish, for it missed out all the chief towns. But Nicholas did not care. He had said it; so it was to be.

But for a while he ruled according to his will. And the nations suffered for it—Poland more than all. Constantine was her king. But he was stern and severe beyond measure; so the Poles grew dis-

contented, and said to one another, "Why not win our freedom?—we are slaves."

So when the Diet met in the great hall at Warsaw, it dared to say that Nicholas was wrong. Then Nicholas in wrath sent and said that the Diet should sit no longer publicly. And the next year he came to see it himself.

Then, in a lofty voice and manner, he spoke in French to the deputies sitting round, not treating it as a Russian nation. Before he left the city that night, the minds of the Poles were bent to rebel.

Then, on a November evening, the boys of the military school marched to the fortress of the town. "We will fight for Poland," they cried; "give us cartridges." "Take them from the Russians," cried their leaders. At that they marched upon the Russian barracks. The few soldiers fled in terror, and the Poles took their guns and ammunition. Then they marched to the palace of Constantine.

But Constantine was gone; he had fled for fear. Then the Poles were triumphant, and gathered a council together in the city.

There was fierce quarrelling and disputing. For some cried out, "Let us fight against Russia, and win back our freedom;" and others, "That is no use; we are not strong enough. Let us ask Russia humbly to give us free laws and reform."

So they sent, and asked Nicholas. But the Iron

Emperor's answer came back, stern and firm—"Poland shall gain nothing by rebellion."

Then those who wished for war rejoiced, and they chose their leader, but he was a weak man, who knew little of war. Then they declared boldly that "the Czars of Russia had no right to rule in Poland."

Now came a time of fierce war and terrible bloodshed,—the Russians fighting against the Poles, and the Poles quarrelling among themselves. The Poles fought bravely, and at first gained glorious victories. But who can save a nation that is divided in itself? As Russia had fallen before the Tartars, so Poland fell before the Russians.

For in the streets of Warsaw there were quarrels between the Poles, and fights and bloody scenes. One leader after another was set up and deposed. One party after another gained the upper hand, and ruled as it willed.

So the day came when the Russians climbed up the walls of Warsaw, and the hope of the Poles was over. They prayed for peace. And Nicholas gave them a hard peace. He took away the freedom of Poland for ever. There were to be no more Diets, no more Polish troops.

So the Poles were servants to Russia. And when Nicholas heard that all was quiet, he thought that things were safe and he could rule as he willed.

But he did not know that his deed had only killed for him a weak enemy, and had roused up mighty enemies in Europe.

For the French people had felt great pity for the Poles. They had tried in vain to make their Government help them. Now that troubles had come upon them they helped them nobly. They built schools for their children, and gave homes to the Polish exiles. When Nicholas saw this he was angry.

And another nation was gradually becoming a foe to Russia. That was England. For in China and through Asia the English and Russians were each fighting to win the Asian tribes. And when one gained the other could not gain. So they watched one another with jealous eyes, like dogs that have each their own food, and would steal the other's if they did not fear to lose their own.

But Nicholas could not yet afford to make war on England, for troubles were growing everywhere.

Turkey, that great old enemy of the Russians, was the trouble nearest home. Nicholas had had a short war with the Turks about two points. First, he wished to help the Greeks, who were trying to win independence; and secondly, he wanted to gain freedom for the Christians in Bulgaria, which belonged, as you know, to Turkey.

Now the Turks were afraid that they would lose their power over Bulgaria. So they constantly



agreed to treaties when they could not help themselves, and then broke them as soon as they got the chance.

Try to think of these nations of Europe as of different children living together. They have quarrels, and some join together against the others. Some are like strong elder children, some are smaller and weaker.

Just now, you see, France, one child, is angry with Russia, because she thinks that Russia has been very cruel to poor little Poland, who is like a much younger, weaker child. And Turkey and Russia are quarrelling about the same sort of thing. For Turkey has been ill-treating the province of Bulgaria, which is weak and small, and Russia is angry about that. Also, quite secretly, she wishes to take Bulgaria for herself; and she would like to drive Turkey out of Europe altogether.

Because France and Turkey both were angry with Russia, they began to agree to join together against her—not openly, but they sent friendly messages to each other.

Russia saw that, and was afraid that if Turkey and France joined together they would be stronger than she was. So she thought she would make friends with England. But very foolishly she sent this message: "If England will join me, I do not care much about what the others think or do. I

want to take Bulgaria for myself, and perhaps Constantinople too."

When England heard that, she was afraid that Russia would get too strong if she drove the Turks away and took their land. So, instead of joining Russia, she began to make friends with France and Turkey.

Just at this moment Turkey broke her word about Bulgaria. So Russia sent a large army into Turkey. That was as if one child struck the other a blow in the face.

Turkey did not strike back at once. There was a meeting of all the Powers—to talk about it, like a meeting of children to settle a quarrel. But it was of no use; Turkey demanded that Russia should take her army away at once. But Russia answered that she would not. England too told France what Russia had said about those "others," and told Austria and Prussia too. That made them all so angry that Austria and Prussia agreed that they would certainly not help Russia, while France joined England and Turkey to fight Russia.

Now you see how matters stood.

A terrible war began. For a time they fought near Turkey, but France and England did not mean to stop in Turkey. The great English and French fleets, joined together, came sailing grandly into the Black Sea. When the Russian sailors saw them,

they said to one another, "We must draw back; it is of no use to try to fight these fleets."

Then the Allies, who were rich in ships, sent some to sail up the Baltic, and there they fought and won. Others went up to the White Sea, and to the cold north of Siberia.

Meanwhile the Russians were fighting in Turkey, and they were trying in vain to take a Turkish city, Silistria. But they could not take it. And in the Russian camp there was misery. For all-round men lay dying of cholera and fever, and bad food. And no one knew on one night if he would see another morning. And men said to one another, "This cannot last; we must leave Turkey."

At last even the Iron Emperor Nicholas saw it too. And with a heavy heart he left Turkey, and sent to say that he was marching away into Russia. But it was too late. For already the great generals of the French and English and Turkish army had met together and settled, "We will not be satisfied with driving Russia away from Turkey. We will go on, and attack the Russian land."

So in September the great allied fleet sailed across the Black Sea. And thousands on thousands of soldiers landed on the little three-cornered island of the Crimea. So the Crimean War began.

I do not mean to tell you much about it. It is

all too long and too full. Some day you will read it for yourselves.

The great town that the Allies had to take was Sebastopol. And in a splendidly courageous spirit the Russians set themselves to defend it. They raised ramparts round it of the stone of the island, and merchants and soldiers and sailors worked all at once at the great earthworks.

Meanwhile the Allies had won great battles:—the battle of the Alma, and the battle of Balaclava, with the glorious charge of the Light Brigade. It was a fierce and terrible war, and the slaughter and the deaths were ghastly.

But the great thing for Russia was that a great awakening was coming upon her. For everywhere the Russians were beaten, and in spite of their vast army they could not fight against the Europeans.

And why not? Because the government of the Russians was corrupt, and the Russian soldiers were not free men, but slaves. Everywhere, even under the iron hand of Nicholas, there had been theft going on among the public officers. And none could trust his fellow, or feel sure that he would be upright and honest. And the Russian soldiers had no free glorying in their country, for they were sometimes even beaten to make them charge more fiercely. The bravery which comes from fear of



punishment can never match the bravery from love and desire to save a loved country.

So the whole Russian nation awoke suddenly and cried out for the freedom without which it was sick and weak. "All these years," they said, "we have not murmured at our taxes, or at our hard government at the hands of Nicholas, for we thought, although we suffered, that our nation was glorious among the nations of Europe. But now we see her despised and weak and conquered, and Nicholas is nothing but a petty tyrant."

Then the patriots and learned men of Russia helped to give expression to her cry. And they wrote books, calling on her to arise and break her fetters. Thus spoke one:—

"Arise, O Russia! awake from thy long sleep. O Czar, thou wert to Russia as a god upon earth. Thou hast sought nothing but power. Thou hast forgotten Russia. But Truth has at length arisen."

And the Czar in his palace heard those words and that cry. And his lips grew pale with pain, and his heart was broken within him, that the voice of his nation should thus cry out against him. Still his mind was too rigid and too stiff to bend to new wants and fresh ways. "My successor," he said, "may do what he will; I cannot change."

But the heart of the Iron Emperor was broken,

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and he only longed to die. He went out in the bitter winds of the Russian winter, and so fell ill.

Then he sent to the cities of Russia, saying, "The Emperor is dying."

So died the Iron Emperor.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### FREEING THE SERFS.

AND now for the last few years of which I shall tell you. When the Iron Emperor died, he left two heavy burdens upon his son. For the Crimean War was to be ended, and Russia was to have her freedom.

I cannot now tell you much of Nicholas's son, Alexander II. He had a hard reign, a heavy task, and a sad end. And he worked for the right, and you must honour him and pity him for his sorrows.

Inside the great city of Sebastopol there was fear and dismay. For when the men looked out they saw the French and English guns pointing their thousand black mouths; and when the officers counted their men they found they had lost 18,000 in the last month from the millions of bursting shells and bombs, and deadly gear. And round them were crushed roofs and broken walls, and dead bodies lying. So one September day at noon, when the sun was beating down, the French made a great

charge on the broken wall of the city, and Sebastopol was taken. The Russians fled to the north of the Crimea with saddened hearts full of fear. Then throughout the land men knew the war could not last much longer. And it was only a few months before Alexander was forced to treat with the sovereigns who were his enemies. And peace was signed—a sad, hard peace for Russia. For she lost her right of protecting the Christians in Turkey, and her right to hold the Black Sea and keep in it her fleet. So the cause for which Peter the Great and Catharine, and their successors, had fought and worked was lost.

Yet the Russians had not time to think or sorrow much for their defeat. For on the very day when Alexander announced to them that the war was ended and the Black Sea lost, he said also—

“Government and the laws shall be greatly reformed.” And at that the people rejoiced, for they knew it meant—the freeing of the serfs.

Then all the voices that had been hushed for fear of Nicholas spoke freely, and they said, “We have to fight in the name of the highest truth. We must thank the war which has opened our eyes to the dark side of our nation’s life.” Now you may perhaps think that Alexander’s work was easy when the nation’s will went along with him. But it was a task hard beyond all that you can fancy. For



the Russians were hoping for so much. All the serfs were saying, "Now we shall be quite free, and own our land we live on. That will be given us free." And they hoped and longed for a glorious freedom for themselves, and for freedom all in a minute.

Yet they could not have it. For how were the masters to be paid for the taking away of their servants and their lands? Those masters were a great difficulty. They made up their minds, and said, "We will not let the Czar take from us our servants and riches without paying us for them. We will stand on our rights."

And another difficulty. The Czar had no men to help him. And this partly for a very odd reason. Each State official worked a good deal alone; often each had an assistant whom he chose—a kind of clerk. When the official gave up his post, this assistant often took his place. Now the officials generally chose assistants who were less clever than they were. Then when these assistants became officials they chose assistants less clever still, and so on, till all the officials were very stupid men.

And so you can understand how difficult Alexander's work was. For the people were expecting almost more than they could have, and the nobles were determined they should not have it, and there were very few men wise enough to help them to it.

And yet in spite of all that, Alexander did his

work. I cannot tell you the names of the grand men who helped him to do it, and the difficulties against which they had to fight. They examined carefully as to what right the serfs had to the land they lived on. They told how the Russians had been free men, as you know, till the act of Boris Godounof that made them slaves, and how the land was theirs by right. And at last they made an end, and put out this decree, and the Emperor put his sign and seal to it. This is what it said: "On the 19th of October 1861, the peasants are to be free. They are to live on the land where they now live, and to pay a rent for it to their nobles who own it, of money or of labour. But this rent need not last. They may buy their land from the nobles, and own it for ever; and for this end the State will lend them money."

So this Decree of Emancipation was read aloud to the peasants in all the churches.

And the Russian land was free.

# PERIODS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY.

A.D. 850	Rurik, Prince of Novgorod. Olaf, brother of Rurik. Igor, son of Rurik. Olga, widow of Igor. Sviatoslav, son of Igor.	} Sovereigns of Kief.	<i>A hundred and fifty years of Heathen Princes.</i>
1000	Vladimir, died 1015. Jaroslav, died 1055.		<i>Fifty years of good Christian rule.</i>
1055	Two strong princes { Vladimir Monomachus, died 1125. Andrew, died 1174.		<i>Two hundred years of disorder and anarchy.</i>
1240	Two brave defenders { Alexander, died 1264. Dmitri Donskoi, died 1389.		<i>Two hundred and fifty years of Tartar rule.</i>
1480	Ivan III., the Great, 1462-1505. Vassili, son of Ivan IV., 1505-1533. Ivan IV., the Terrible, son of Vassili, 1533-1580. Feodor, son of Ivan IV., 1580-1598. Boris Godounov, the Usurper, 1598-1604.		<i>A hundred and twenty years of the first Czars.</i>
1604	Dmitri—Chouisky—the Tonchino Rogue.		<i>Ten years of Pre- tenders and confusion.</i>
1613	Michael Romanov, 1613-1645. Alexis, son of Michael, 1645-1676. Feodor, son of Alexis, 1676-1682. (Sophia, Regent, 1682-1689.) Peter I., the Great, 1689-1725. (Catharine, Regent, 1725-1727.) Peter II., son of Peter I., 1727-1730. Anne, niece of Peter I., 1730-1740. (Anne, Regent, 1740-1741.) Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I., 1741-1762. Peter III., nephew of Elizabeth, 1762. Catharine the Great, wife of Peter III., 1762-1796. Paul, son of Peter III., 1796-1800. Alexander I., son of Paul, 1801-1825. Nicholas, son of Paul, 1825-1855. Alexander II., son of Nicholas, 1855-1880.		<i>Two hundred and fifty years of the present Czars.</i>
1861			

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